



THE INDEPENDENT

THURSDAY 25 APRIL 1996 40p (IR 45p)



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Cover story

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Shares slump as power bids are blocked

Minister accused of political act as £1bn is wiped off values

PETER RODGERS
Business Editor

The Government yesterday bowed to political pressure and unexpectedly blocked two bids for electricity generating companies, wiping £1bn off the value of power industry shares.

The move by Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, to prevent National Power buying Southern Electric and PowerGen buying Midlands Electricity brought to a halt a wave of mergers that has swept through the electricity industry over the last year.

It overturned a four-to-one majority view at the Monopolies and Mergers Commission that the two deals - which would have been worth £4.5bn - should be conditionally allowed to go ahead. Mr Lang also brushed aside the views of his own officials at the DTI that the takeover would cause no damage to competition.

City and power industry sources claimed that Mr Lang was sidestepping a political row over the impact on competition and electricity prices of dismantling the structure agreed for the electricity industry when it was privatised in 1990.

Generation was separated from supply and distribution, but the bids would have gone a long way towards bringing the two sides of the industry back together.

After a leak of the MMC report earlier this month, senior Tories, including Norman Lamont, the former Chancellor, attacked its conclusions and

urged the Government to ban the takeovers.

There were also claims that Mr Lang's decision was to duck further controversy by discouraging a bid from Southern Company of the United States for National Power.

Southern Company already owns a UK electricity compa-

nied the takeovers and yesterday Margaret Beckett, the Labour trade and industry spokeswoman, said she welcomed "this respite in the free-for-all of merger and takeover activity that the Government has allowed in the electricity industry".

However, she said Labour stuck to its view that the whole electricity industry should be referred to the MMC, because the issue of vertical integration between generators and supply companies had not been resolved.

In defence of his decision to snub the MMC, Mr Lang was able to cite Professor Stephen Littlechild, the electricity regulator, John Bridgeman, the Director-General of the Office of Fair Trading and Patricia Hodgson, the BBC head of policy and planning, who was the dissenting member of the MMC.

All three were against the bids and Mr Lang's decision marked a rare victory for Professor Littlechild, whose sceptical views about the electricity takeover wave have until now been largely ignored.

Mr Lang insisted that he was not against vertical integration in principle, but said that it was not appropriate in these two cases.

The DTI underlined the rarity of a decision to overturn MMC clearance of a takeover bid by citing as precedent an obscure 1988 case of a merger between Book Club Associates and Leisure Circle.

Details, page 19
Comment, page 21



Ian Lang: Brushed aside views of DTI officials

The old JFK chair that rocked the Onassis sale



Seat of power: John Kennedy's rocking chair fetched £291,000, almost 90 times its estimate, at Sotheby's sale of Jacqui Onassis's estate

Report, page 3

'Cloud-cuckoo' warning by Major

DONALD MACINTYRE and COLIN BROWN

John Major yesterday confronted head on the extreme Euroscepticism within his party by warning they were living in "cloud-cuckoo land" if they thought Britain could prosper outside the European Union.

In a move calculated to snuff out flirtation with the idea of eventual withdrawal from Europe - an idea fuelled by Sir James Goldsmith's high profile entry into British politics - Mr Major declared that Britain "is not a little England and must never become so".

As John Redwood, the former Welsh Secretary and leading Eurosceptic, held talks with the anti-EU tycoon in a London hotel, the Prime Minister derided as "naive, dam-

aging and just plain wrong" the idea that Britain faced a choice between withdrawal and "going along with every demand our partners make".

But in a speech balanced to satisfy the party's more mainstream Euro-sceptics Mr Major gave a clear indication that he was prepared to block progress at the EU Inter-Governmental Conference unless "backdoor" imposition of the Social Chapter on Britain was halted.

Mr Major denounced in his speech to the Institute of Directors the "creative" use of Health and Safety Provisions - over which the UK does not have a veto - to usher in measures like the 48-hour week from which Britain's social chapter opt-out should protect it. And he promised that Britain would seek to "build a Europe



that is more in our image... a Europe of nation states. He warned: "We can't be expected to have confidence in

European agreements if they are subsequently undermined by shifts in interpretation. I take this very seriously. I don't want to be misunderstood about this: if old agreements are to be broken, I do not see how we can reach new ones."

Nevertheless, pro-European MPs professed themselves delighted at Mr Major's unequivocal rebuttal of those Tories and sections of the press who have begun to contemplate the prospect of withdrawal if Britain fails to repatriate significant powers from Brussels in the IGC.

Edwina Currie praised Mr Major's speech and said: "He's quite right that opponents of the EU are in cloud-cuckoo land. The biggest cuckoo is James Goldsmith and his sidekick cuckoo is John Redwood."

In the 50-minute talks at the Dorchester Hotel, Mr Redwood failed to persuade Sir James to lift the threat of holding Referendum Party candidates against Tory candidates in the general election. But Mr Redwood is promoting an agenda for the renegotiation of the Treaty of Rome which he believes Euro-sceptics will rally around, and which could build bridges with Sir James.

"He is still going to carry on. I haven't managed to persuade him to back the Conservative Party as the best way of achieving the kind of Europe we want. I was not surprised by that," Mr Redwood said. "Both of us believe we want a Europe of nations... [not] a single country... I believe the Conservative Party is the best means of achieve that"

IN BRIEF

Dudayev's last words

He had lost count of the number of times that the Russians had tried to kill him. There had been car bombs, grenades, and a bizarre occasion when he was given a knife with an electronic homing device in the handle, allowing aircraft to track him down. And yet, he said, flashing a cynical grin, "My only bodyguard is Allah." Dzhokhar Dudayev, the rebel Chechen leader killed by the Russians on Sunday, gave one of his last interviews to Phil Reeves. Page 11

Dunblane gun amnesty

The Home Secretary yesterday announced a firearms amnesty in the wake of the Dunblane massacre. Page 9

Bra to detect cancer

A fibre-optic bra that can examine the tissues of the breast without using harmful X-rays has been developed at a London college. Page 5

Historic win for Arafat

The final phase of the Middle East peace talks moved a stage closer when the Palestinian parliament-in-exile was considering the removal from its charter clauses which call for the replacement of Israel with a Palestinian state. Page 12

Today's weather

Dry and bright in southern and central areas. Cloudy in the North. Section Two, page 33

Teachers to strike over problem boy

FRAN ABRAMS and JUDITH JUDD

Teachers at a Nottingham comprehensive will go on indefinite strike tomorrow in their dispute over a disruptive pupil after talks aimed at averting the stoppage ended without agreement.

Ministers responded to the crisis at Glaisdale School last night by saying that parents of the most disruptive children might lose their right to appeal against school expulsions.

The Nottingham controversy arose after an appeals panel ordered the return of 13-year-old Richard Wilding to lessons. Staff at his school say

he was involved in more than 30 violent and disruptive incidents in less than two terms. Gillian Shephard, the education secretary, urged teachers at the school not to strike, but said that pupils who were excluded more than once might forfeit their rights.

Twenty of the 38 staff at Glaisdale School, recently praised by the Labour Party for its work with disenchanted 14-year-olds, will stop work after the local authority stressed its determination to see Richard Wilding return.

Officials of the National Association of Schoolmasters' Union of Women Teachers who met the authority yesterday

said the negotiations had run out of time, but hoped a solution could be found soon.

Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the union, said: "Maybe the parents can be persuaded to do the sensible thing, because it is obvious there has been a total breakdown in the relationship between the pupil and the school."

"All we are doing is striking in defence of sensible discipline. If the parents were to announce they have decided to withdraw their child, it might still be in time to prevent the strike."

It seemed that the strike might be called off after Richard's parents, Rita and Philip Wilding, agreed with the

school's head on Tuesday that he could be taught in isolation and in a special unit for the time being. Staff objected to a further proposal that he should eventually be reintegrated into lessons. The boy had been temporarily excluded three times before being sent home permanently in February this year.

The local authority supporting the school's decision, but an independent appeals panel later overturned it. Since Easter, Richard has been taught alone at the school by a supply teacher and has not been allowed to play with other pupils at break times or go to the toilet on his own.

However, Mr de Gruchy claimed that the boy had threatened another pupil with a chair and had been allowed to wander around corridors and mix with other pupils.

Last night, the local authority met the National Union of Teachers, which has at least 10 members at the school and has discussed refusing to teach Richard.

Meanwhile, as well as changing the rules on appeals, ministers may agree to head teachers' demands that they should be allowed to exclude children temporarily for more than 15 days in one year. At present they must permanently exclude a child after this period has elapsed.

Education, Section Two

Beware, the end of the world is nearly nigh

TOM WILKIE
Science Editor

Five dates when the Apocalypse was predicted

1033: Thousandth anniversary of the Crucifixion, as was then believed. In Northern France and Germany there was real expectation that Jesus would return to reign in glory.

1534-35: The Anabaptists of Münster, Germany, launched a reign of terror in the imminent expectation of Christ's second coming.

1842: American William Miller said after studying the Old Testament that the world would end

in October 1842, later known among his followers as "the great disappointment".

1914: The Millenite movement, later Jehovah's Witnesses, believed that the Bible predicted the end of the world in 1914.

2000: Evangelical protestants are convinced that the world will really end this time. Exact dates no longer fashionable, but millions of pentecostals say we are living in the end-times.

The researchers started off by carefully examining the parameters of Eros's current path. They then ran simulations on computer of how it might evolve over the coming millennia.

They discovered "an orbital resonance with Mars" - essentially an interaction between the gravity of Mars and Eros itself - which was capable of divert-

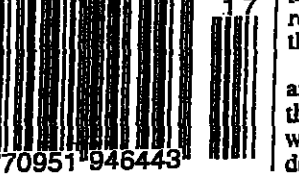
ing the asteroid from its current Mars-crossing path onto an Earth-crossing path.

The researchers write that their computer calculations show that over a period of two million years, "Of eight trial orbits that closely match Eros's present orbital parameters, three become Earth-crossing on the time-scale of our simula-

tions, and one of these hits the Earth after 1.14 million years."

But they stress that the orbits of small planetoids like Eros are very "chaotic". This does not mean that they are incalculable, but that reliable predictions over long times depend on measuring their present positions to an unattainable degree of accuracy. To cope with that, the researchers have calculated the likelihood of a collision and found, perhaps reassuringly, that although 1.14 million years is certainly possible the timescale is more likely to be about a hundred million years.

Until now conventional scientific thinking has been that the end of the world is three or four billion years away when the sun will have expanded enough to swallow us up.



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news

Hot air gusts through corridors of powerlessness

Whatever the corridors of Westminster reek of, it is not usually power. Only when Secretaries of State emerge from their Whitehall fastnesses does the Chamber resound to the noise of puffs, or, puffing.

Take yesterday for example. During Education questions the Junior Education Minister, Cheryl Gillan, fielded a planted Tory query concerning an alleged Liberal Democrat plan to abolish Church schools. Ms Gillan deprecated this appalling attempt to curtail freedom of choice.

This was too much for the Lib-Dem education spokesman, Don Foster, who leaped to his

feet and bellowed his denial at the Tory benches. Mr Foster has not grasped that the dozens of funny little black things hanging from the ornate ceiling of the Chamber are microphones. Many bombastic people are the same, using for public speech a volume and intonation otherwise reserved for making international phone calls and explaining things to foreigners. Several schoolboys asleep in the public gallery were jolted awake by the ferocity of his simple assault: IT IS NOT TRUE!

Nor was it. Ms Gillan read out the full quote to back her argument, but the inclusion of the original words "in an ideal

world" made it clear that she was misusing what the Lib-Dems had said. Now it will appear in every Central Office briefing. There is nothing that the noisy Mr Foster can do.

My second illustration of powerlessness is Michael Fabricant, the Tory member for Mid-Staffordshire, who introduced a Tea Minute Bill allowing him to discuss the matter of relations between Britain, America, Europe and the rest of the world. Space flight and interplanetary exploration were somehow omitted from the Bill's purview. Which was probably a printing error, because no aspect of the galactic historical



DAVID AARONOVITCH

process is too large or complex to daunt Mr Fabricant from having a clear view of it.

Strangely, whatever part of the world is under discussion, he has been there, or somewhere close by. No matter what occupation or experience is

worrying MPs, Mr F has done it for a spell or undergone it.

So he started in Australia and skipped, via an alarming series of clichés, across America (where he had worked in Newhaven, Connecticut - very close to the centre of power in Washington, apparently), back to Britain, glancing briefly at Taiwan. There were windows of opportunity, unlocking doors, a confluence of ways, a failure of stewardship, today's reality, the future's certainty and - most alarmingly - "a fast approaching crossroads". Duck! Finally he confessed that "the world is going through a time of change". I wondered idly

whether there might have been a brief period, perhaps during the reign of the tenth Rameses, when for a year or so the world had not been going through a time of change. Unlikely.

Mr Fabricant presented his little Bill and sat down. Immediately his fellow Conservative, Edward Leigh, stood up and moved an amendment to the big new divorce Bill - and thus illustrated a third kind of powerlessness. Mr Leigh does not much like divorce. He (rightly) worries for children whom, studies show, suffer from the acrimony of breakdown and deprivation of one of their parents. So far, so good.

What he has not yet grasped, however, is that there isn't much Parliament can do about it. He and the other assorted MPs, Dames and notorious busybodies around him advocate the retention of the notion of fault to "send a message" from Parliament. But even he had to admit - albeit reluctantly - that we could not return to the days of divorce trials, hotels in Brighton and private detectives. On this sort of issue the "message", of course, flows the other way. Alas, by the time that Mr Leigh finished, the only man who could possibly have helped him out had left the chamber. Mr Fabricant was gone.

IN BRIEF

Soccer club sells own-label whisky

Manchester United football club launches its own-label whisky today featuring the team's Red Devil crest and sold in bars at Old Trafford, off-licences and supermarkets. It is made by the Scottish distillery I. J. Gordon, the world's biggest own-label whisky producer and supplier to J. & S. Watson.

The £1.99 Scotch will add to United's marketing and merchandising income, already £13.5m a year. But alcohol watchdogs are worried that it will appeal to under-age drinkers. "Some youngsters are obsessive about football and with a club as big as Manchester United there is a clamour for their products," said Mark Bennett of Alcohol Concern.

Stab death charges

Two men have been charged with the murder of a midwife found stabbed to death in her home 19 months ago. Kathleen Hempsall, 40, was found lying in a pool of blood in a downstairs room of her house in the Castle area of Lincoln on 11 October last year. Police said Perry Calvert, 20, and Alan Mark Boulter, 20, who both come from the Lincoln area, would appear before local magistrates.

Mine blown up

Bomb disposal experts blew up a fourth Second World War anti-invasion mine found on a beach during clearance of sea defences uncovered by recent low tides. The first three 20lb mines found at Longsands, east Cornwall, were blown up last Friday since when the beach has been closed to the public. All the mines were attached to 200 metres of scaffolding revealed by shifting sands below the army firing area at Tregantle Fort in Whitsand Bay.

Island sale halted

The planned sale of a Scottish island famous for its otters was halted after a plea from the animal and conservation charity Born Free Foundation for more time to consider its future. The six-acre Eilean Ban off the Isle of Skye was to have been auctioned in Glasgow with a reserve price of £40,000. The uninhabited island contains a defunct lighthouse and two empty cottages. It was the home of the author Gavin Maxwell, who wrote *Ring of Bright Water*.

£5m video raid

A police raid smashed a video pirating operation worth up to £5m. West Yorkshire police seized 1,500 videos and 35 video recorders in the raid on a house in Little Horton, Bradford. The videos included some of the latest releases and porn films. The detectives were helped by officers from the Federation against Copyright Theft. A 40-year-old man was arrested and is being questioned.

Queen's complaint

The Press Complaints Commission upheld a complaint by the Queen over a magazine article which named her Britain's wealthiest woman. The Commission concluded that the magazine *Business* failed to check its facts, made a number of errors and presented speculation as established fact when assessing the Queen's personal fortune at £2.2bn. Editor Peter Kirwan maintained that his magazine's valuation of the Queen's wealth was justified and legitimate.

Higgins 'too ill'

The snooker player Alex Higgins is too ill to stand trial for assault, a court was told. The 47-year-old former world champion was due to appear before magistrates in Stockport, Cheshire, accused of assaulting a 14-year-old boy and a police officer in the execution of his duty. He adjourned the case till June after reading statements from his solicitors and a consultant surgeon regarding Higgins's medical condition.

Walker found dead

Rescuers found the body of an elderly walker missing on Britain's highest mountain. The 71-year-old man set out to scale 4,406ft Ben Nevis by a high rocky ridge but failed to return. Mountain rescue teams found his body in Coire Leis, a snow covered gully.

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Sinn Fein rule out return to ceasefire

DAVID MCKITTRICK
Ireland Correspondent

The senior Sinn Fein negotiator Martin McGuinness yesterday came close to ruling out any early resumption of the IRA ceasefire, in terms which appear to preclude the inclusion of his party in the coming political negotiations.

Mr McGuinness's pessimistic words left the firm impression that no ceasefire is to be expected before the British and Irish governments convene inter-party negotiations on 10 July. The Government has made it clear that Sinn Fein will be allowed to the table only if an IRA ceasefire is in place.

Both Sinn Fein and the Social Democratic and Labour party yesterday announced that they would be contesting the election which is to take place on 30 May. The decisions were expected, since the Government has indicated that only parties which stand in the election will be eligible to join talks.

But it now seems that Sinn Fein will be fighting the election while no ceasefire is in effect, which means its successful candidates will obtain a mandate which is unlikely to impress Unionist parties. The SDLP and the Irish government will be disappointed that Sinn Fein is not to be at the table since they and various other elements believe that talks without republicans will have little value or chance of success.

Some reports said yesterday that the SDLP had also decided to take its seats in the forum which is to be composed of those elected. Party sources said last night that no decision had been taken about entering the forum, whose very existence has been criticised by the party in the recent past.

Mr McGuinness, speaking on the BBC's *Newsline* 6.30 programme, said: "I certainly think at the moment, against the background of British government bad faith, that there is no prospect whatsoever of a restoration of the ceasefire, unless we can be in a position to convince them that we are going to have real and meaningful peace negotiations."

He claimed there was a broad feeling in the nationalist community that the British government and the Unionists "are not serious about negotiating an honest and just settlement". He said that at the moment it was not worth his while to go to the IRA to ask for another ceasefire. He demanded the removal of all pre-conditions to Sinn Fein involvement in talks and revealed that the ceasefire of August 1994 was never permanent, it was a complete cessation which could only have been made permanent through dialogue between the British and Irish governments and all the political parties.

"I think that this was a point that was missed during the whole course of the ceasefire,"

The artist Cerith Wyn Evans with his installation *Inverse Reverse Perverse* at the White Cube gallery, in St James's, London. Photograph: Justin Westover

Brown scores over tax 'lie peddlers'

JOHN RENTOUL
Political Correspondent

Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, claimed first blood in his battle with tax advisers yesterday as he welcomed the cancellation by the leading accountancy firm KPMG of its seminars to advise people how to avoid higher taxes under a Labour government.

Mr Brown on Tuesday branded tax advisers in general "lie peddlers" for predicting the levels at which taxes would rise. KPMG, which he did not name, was the main target of the shadow Chancellor's wrath, which was roused particularly by the firm's assumption that, where Labour had not an-

nounced a policy, the policy in the 1992 election manifesto would probably apply.

KPMG issued a statement yesterday which said that it had decided to cancel remaining seminars being held under the "pre-election tax planning" title. A spokesman said: "These seminars have become something of a political football, but we are apologetic and we have to maintain that. We will continue to give appropriate advice to clients who seek it, but not in the public forum of seminars."

But the shadow Chancellor was undermined by a survey of 51 Labour general election candidates which found that 50 of them favoured a new top rate of income tax on annual income

over £60,000. A similar overwhelming majority believed that a Labour government should scrap the Trident nuclear missile system, which last year's party conference unit voted to keep.

Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, kept up the pressure on Mr Brown's refusal to specify tax rates and levels. He said: "The Tories lied to us last time. Labour seems to be preparing to lie to us next time."

Mr Ashdown accused Labour of being "so scared of their past tax record" that they were "caught like frightened rabbits in the headlights of the Tories' attacks. They refuse to say how they will pay for their promises. They refuse to commit themselves to anything."

He told a rally in Twickenham, south-west London, last night: "Without more truth on tax, we'll never restore trust in politics."

Liberal Democrat officials said their policy was to put the standard rate of income tax back up from 24p to 25p in the pound "if necessary", to increase spending on education. They also would impose a new 50p top rate on incomes over £100,000 a year, and use the £1bn revenue to raise the level at which people started to pay national insurance contributions and tax - taking 750,000 low-paid people out of paying taxes and NI contributions altogether.

A Liberal Democrat source close to Mr Ashdown said: "Ours is probably the tax poli-

cy Labour would like, but they won't say so."

At the last general election, Labour and Liberal Democrat tax policies were similar, with the parties only disagreeing on the level at which a new 50p top rate of income tax would come in: the former said £40,000 a year, the latter said £50,000. Both wanted to abolish the limit on NI contributions, which meant that those on over £22,000 a year would pay more.

Since then, Mr Brown has scrapped all Labour's tax commitments and, in the vote on the 1p cut in the standard rate of income tax in last year's Budget, Labour officially abstained, while the Liberal Democrats and 10 Labour rebels voted against.

Child sex claims: Inquiry team seeks assurances over final report

Letter highlights 'worrying' fear

ROGER DOBSON

An independent inquiry team investigating allegations of sexual abuse of young children at a council-run centre for children in Newcastle has asked for reassurances that its report will be published.

Dr Richard Barker and the team have been told that the local authority's lawyers are now investigating whether the report should be published in the wake of the controversial decision in North Wales not to publish the 300-page report into a decade of child abuse at children's homes in Cwylid.

A confidential letter to the team from Newcastle council's lawyers says that a barrister who chaired another inquiry, will be asked for advice. It says: "Hopefully he can provide us with ammunition we could use should there be any dispute with our insurers."

The move by Dr Richard Barker and his three colleagues, who were called in to investigate by the city council in Newcastle, follows widespread concern about the influence of insurers in the Cwylid investigation and the subsequent non-publication of that report.

William Hague, the secretary of State for Wales, has now told councils to find a way of publishing the report, and he is also believed to be talking to other ministers about the insurance issue. John Jilling and the team who carried out the investigation in Cwylid are also concerned about the role of insurers. Their report reveals that the insurers did not want an investigation because of the useful information it might provide for possible litigants.

The Newcastle inquiry was set up following allegations that young children at a council-run nursery had been sexually abused by workers. It is understood that at least 20 children are alleged to have been victims of abuse.



Victims of the abusers

The team is led by Dr Barker, principal lecturer in social work at the University of Northumbria. Other members are Dr Jacqui Saradjian, a clinical psychologist specialising in

child abuse issues, Roy Wardell, a former director of social services in Barnsley, and Judith Jones, a social worker.

Dr Barker said yesterday: "We were told when we began that the report would be published and have no reason to believe that that position has changed." He declined to make any further comment.

The council letter refers to a report which says that the duty of an authority to protect its finances from legal action may take precedence over the duty to protect children from the mistakes and failings of the past.

"If this is correct it is very worrying," the letter says. Meanwhile, the lawyers of councils who took over from

Clywd County Council in local government reorganisation met yesterday to discuss what action to take following Mr Hague's instruction that they produce a publishable version of the Jilling report.

The lawyers will now report back to their councils and there are fears that it may take weeks for decisions to be made as the reports of the lawyers become entangled in the monthly and in one case, two-monthly committee cycles of the councils.

Andrew Loveridge, from Flintshire council, said after the meeting: "The legal advisers have now met and will be briefing their own leaders and chief executives."

"Until everyone has received that briefing and a mechanism has been agreed by the councils to take this forward, Flintshire, which has a co-ordinating role, is not in a position to make any further comment."

Flintshire is already looking at the possibility that an agreement may not be reached. The council has told the Secretary of State for Wales that if the councils cannot agree he will have to appoint an arbitrator.

The letter also says that Mr Hague now has all the other reports and legal advice and is the best person to make a decision. It adds: "With all that information clearly you are the person best placed to consider all of the issues including whether or not you should call a full judicial review."

The letter also tackles Mr Hague about not acting when the report was sent to him by Clywd council.

"It is clear that you have singularly failed to grasp the opportunity presented to you by Clywd," it says.

Social workers' list a step closer

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

Formation of a social workers' register to help protect children and others in their care will be taken a step further today when John Bowis, the junior health minister, is expected to promise that the Government will take a constructive approach to such a list.

However, his pledge will stop well short of a commitment to introduce such a body, modelled on the lines of the General Medical Council and the nurses' council.

Members can be struck off both of these for malpractice. But amid mounting demands for such action in the wake of a string of scandals in chil-

dren's and old people's homes, Mr Bowis will tell a conference of the Association of Directors of Social Services in Cambridge that he recognises the issue needs to be tackled.

And while there are practical difficulties over creating such a body, he is expected to promise publication this summer of a long-awaited consultation document on the idea which will "expose these issues constructively".

To date, Mr Bowis has said only that he has "an open mind" over the idea, and he will today highlight difficulties which include the possibility that the council could cover a million people if everyone working in social services was covered.

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DIRECT LINE

Labour keeps Tory divorce plan alive

COLIN BROWN, DONALD MACINTYRE AND STEPHEN GOODWIN

The Government was last night forced to rely on Labour to win the first crucial vote on its controversial Divorce Bill in the teeth of a revolt by more than 100 Tory MPs.

MPs last night decisively rejected attempts by leading Tory MPs — backed by eight ministers — to maintain the concept of fault in divorce proceedings on a free vote on the Family Law Bill in the Commons.

But it was the Opposition's support which ensured that a substantial revolt of more than 100 Tories led by the former Trade Minister Edward Leigh failed to reverse plans to introduce no-fault divorces after one year. The move was defeated by 267 votes to 137.

The rebellion was supported by former Cabinet ministers John Redwood and John Patten, at least one whip and at least 10 serving ministers including David Maclean and Ann Widdecombe of the Home Office. David Davis (Foreign Office), David Willetts (Public Services) and John Birt (Health). It had also had the backing of most Ulster Unionists and several Eurosceptics, including Richard Shepherd and Sir Teddy Taylor.

Mr Patten said immediately after the vote that the Government should now halt further progress on the Bill because "it was now in the hands of the Opposition."

The hostility to the Lord Chancellor's measure was so great that the Government whips conceded a free vote.

Opening committee stage debate on the Bill, Mr Leigh wanted that the move by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Mackay of Clashfern, would make divorce easier and push up the rate of marriage breakdowns.

Leading Tories backing the two crucial amendments had complained about pressure being put on ministers and others in the so-called "payroll vote" to toe the line. Some reports have claimed that up to 20 ministers privately back the changes.

Mr Leigh, whose motion would also have abolished "quickie divorces" on the grounds of fault, warned of the "catastrophic effects" of divorce on children. Parliament, he said, could not stop it but could lay down a "moral cornerstone" for guidance to marriage partners.

The concept of fault should be retained "not because we want to say, 'you are guilty, you should admit it' and build up bitterness in a marriage. But it serves a purpose sometimes to say, 'I'm sorry, I was wrong'."

Patrick Nicholas (Tory MP for Teignbridge) recalled his experience as a divorce lawyer in a speech strongly advocating the Bill's elimination of fault as a means of reducing the misery in divorce. "One thing I learnt fairly quickly was that the pit of misery and unhappiness which two people locked in deadlock in matrimony can cause each other is absolutely bottomless."

"And now I'm older, I'm at that rather miserable time of my life when I have to look at the marriages of my friends, which I thought were as stable as I believe my own to be, and see them cascading around me. It brings home to me in a very real way just how utterly miserable a divorce situation is."

Sir Edward Heath strongly supported Lord Mackay's Bill and said it would be "absolutely wrong" to restore fault. The former Prime Minister said he did not believe it was any solution to the problem of marital breakdown to make divorce more difficult. If divorce was made more difficult fewer people would get married.



No ban on Beefeaters: Three new Yeoman Warders during their first day on duty at the Tower of London yesterday. Phillip Parker, Andrew Thomson and Trevor Hughes joined the famous body, established in 1486, to take visitors around the Tower of London. Photograph: Brian Harris

'Murder weapon' was given to police

The barrister appearing for a businessman convicted of murdering his girlfriend's parents surprised the Court of Appeal yesterday when he revealed details of a shotgun which "could have been used" in the killings.

The gun was handed in at Tompandy police station in South Wales on 22 September 1995 — five months after Jonathan Jones, 37, was jailed for life for the murders.

Police traced the single-barrelled pump action weapon back to a farmworker, Jeff Ayres. He was known to Harry Toozes, 64, and his 67-year-old wife Megan, who were both shot in the back of the head at their farmhouse in Llanharry, Mid Glamorgan, in July 1993.

Mr John Rees QC told the three appeal judges that police

investigating the murders questioned Mr Ayres, who lived near the Toozes, shortly after the killings and he denied owning a shotgun.

"This was a lie. At the time of the killings it was hidden in his attic and could have been used in the murders," said Mr Rees, who added that Ayres had worked for the Toozes shortly before the murders.

Mr Rees said the gun, which had been offered for sale with ammunition for £30, was handed in to police by a colleague of Mr Ayres. He wanted nothing to do with it because it had allegedly been used in the killings.

The disclosure came at the end of the third and final day of submissions by Mr Rees to Lord Justice Rose, Mr Justice Dyson and Mr Justice Gage.

Earlier in the day, he had told them that Jones did have an alibi, but it was treated unfairly by the judge at the trial.

Jones gave evidence at Newport Crown Court that on the day of the murders he was at his flat in Hollingbourne Towers, Orpington, Kent, and spoke to a lift engineer there.

From a series of photographs shown to him by police, he picked out a man working on the lifts at the flats that day who was not a regular member of the maintenance team, said Mr Rees.

Jones said he remembered speaking to the man, Ronald Bell, on Monday, 26 July, 1993. Mr Bell told him that the lift would be back in operation by the following weekend.

Mr Rees said Jones judged the time he spoke to the engi-

neer as between 1.00pm and 1.30pm because when he reached his flat either *Neighbours* or *Home and Away*, the Australian dramas, was being shown on television.

The prosecution had alleged that Mr Bell could not remember the conversation and all three lift engineers believed they would have reached the flats later than 1.30pm, after their lunch break.

Mr Rees said: "What an incredible piece of luck this was if this was a false alibi that he should have picked out Mr Bell rather than other men he had seen working on the lifts for some considerable time, but who were not there that day."

He said the trial judge, Mr Justice Roush, had directed the jury on the prosecution argument that it was unfortu-

nate for Jones that the arrival time at his flat did not coincide with the workmen's account and that this was the one day they were not there because of a late lunch.

The way he dealt with the timing was unfair on the evidence and circumstances which emerged. In any view, the timings were close," argued Mr Rees. The difference was between 1.30pm — the time given by Jonathan Jones — and 1.45pm, when the lift engineers said they returned.

Mr Rees said the judge also placed insufficient emphasis on the "unique features" of the day related to the police by Jones, which he could not have known about unless he had been at the flats in Kent.

The hearing was adjourned until today.

Birth of a new legend as relics of Jackie O's Camelot snapped up for a king's ransom

DAVID USBORNE
New York

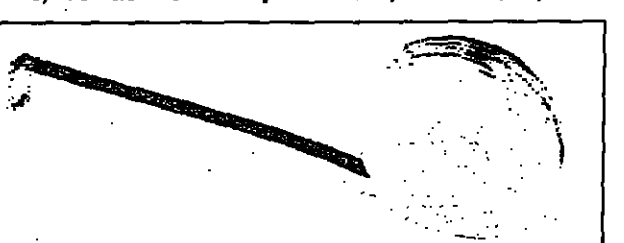
Even Sotheby's own staff could not stifle the occasional giggle. On Tuesday night, the well-heeled and super-rich of America assembled for the first session of the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis estate sale in New York, instantly sending prices through the roof and all the way to saleroom legend.

"All I can tell you about tonight is that it has surpassed our wildest expectations," the auctioneer for evening, Diana Brooks, said breathlessly afterwards. As to what had possessed bidders both in the room and around the world to spend so much, she replied: "This is about history."

History indeed. Embodied in the collection of antiques, artworks and not always especially distinguished knick-knacks, on the block in nine sale sessions ending on Friday, is the enduring mythology of the Kennedy Camelot era. With every item there is the tantalising knowledge that it was either touched, worn, sat on, eaten off or posed for by Jackie or her husband, the late President.



Pieces of history: JFK's humidor (above), sold for \$598,000 and Jackie's tape measure, sold for \$48,875



But even in the sale itself there is history-in-the-making. According to the Sotheby's "suggested bid" prices, the entire sale was meant to harvest a mere \$3.5m to \$4.6m for Jackie's children, John and

under the hammer later yesterday: a giant diamond ring given as an engagement gift to Jacqueline by her second husband Aristotle Onassis. Its suggested price: between \$500,000 and \$600,000.

That Tuesday evening was fast going to test the bounds of sanity became obvious with Lot 10. The revolving display at the head of the room did its game-show-like spin and revealed a footstool so small only the front rows could properly see it. It was scuffed and tatty and had a suggested price of \$100-\$150. "I think I'll just start the bidding at \$5,000," Ms Brooks teased. Sixty seconds later and it was gone for \$33,350. But then this was the stool given to Caroline to help her climb onto a White House window seat.

It was pieces like that, with a clear emotional tie to the Kennedy years, that really put the zeros on the cheques. The highest price of the night was for a walnut cigar humidor given to JFK by the comedian Milton Berle. It triggered a bidding contest that had the audience gasping. Finally, Marvin Shanken, owner of *Cigar Afficionado* magazine, won it for \$598,000.

Lot 56 was one of two oak rocking chairs used by JFK in the White House to soothe his aching back. Within ten seconds of Ms Brooks taking bids, its price had leaped from a suggested \$3,000 to \$70,000. Not much later, the hammer fell on a price, including Sotheby's commission, of \$442,500.

The tiniest item was a tape-measure. Granted, it was not the normal DIY variety, but a silver-cased one, made by Tiffany & Co of New York and initialised JKB (Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy). "A woman has to buy this," Ms Brooks cajoled as the bidding narrowed down to a man and a woman in the sale room. It was the man — a New York decorator — who pocketed it for \$48,875.

On an evening that was somewhere between the Oscars night and a celebrity garage sale, the sublime prices brought excitement, but for some, frustration as well. Karen Mudd and her husband had flown up from Florida with their eyes on the Tiffany measure. They kept bidding until eight grand and then gave up. "We are a little disappointed," she said. "The prices were simply amazing."

Apocalyptic blow for Potter drama

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Media Correspondent

The unique accord to honour Dennis Potter's dying wish that his final dramas *Karneke* and *Cold Lazarus* be shown on both BBC1 and Channel 4 looked a little fragile last night.

After splitting the dramas between them — one cost far more to make than the other — as well as hosting a joint launch and even producing a joint press release, the world might have hoped for a peaceful co-existence to such a historic collaboration. Unfortunately not.

The first instalment of *Karneke* starts at 9.30pm on BBC1 on Sunday and will be repeated on Channel 4 the next night. But far from supporting its erstwhile rival, Channel 4 has scheduled the seminal Francis Ford Coppola movie, *Apocalypse Now*, directly against it.

This contrasts with its somewhat less punchy repeat Channel 4 put out at 9pm last Sunday — a documentary about the British bombings of Kurdish villages in the 1920s and 1930s. The Sunday before, Channel 4 also scheduled a documentary.

That was about the exploitation of deep sleep therapy in an Australian hospital in the 1960s and 1970s.

The schedules reveal that Channel 4 has brought forward its Sunday night film by an hour in an apparent attempt to reduce the audience BBC1 attracts to the first showing of *Karneke*. By contrast, the BBC plans to show *Panorama* in its normal slot when *Karneke* is repeated on Channel 4 at 10pm on Monday.

It will be followed by *Omnibus*, documenting the history of the Comic Relief charity on its 10th anniversary.

Channel 4 claimed innocence yesterday. A spokesman said: "BBC1 has chosen an extremely popular documentary to put against us on Monday, about 10 years of Comic Relief. Potentially it's the most popular *Omnibus* in the run. *Apocalypse Now* has been seen many times and we brought the film forward because it is so long. I don't think the BBC has done us any favours."

The BBC appeared to be unfazed. "Channel 4 has an obligation to run an alternative," a spokesman said.

Model denies affair with Oyston

A model broke down in tears yesterday when she was challenged over her claims that she was raped as a 17-year-old virgin by the media tycoon, Owen Oyston.

The woman, now 25, told a jury at Liverpool Crown Court that she had "detested" Mr Oyston, 62, from the time she first met him in a restaurant.

"He came across as being slimy and creepy," she told the court. Mr Oyston, who has wide media interests and is chairman of Blackpool Football Club, denies raping her and raping and indecently assaulting another teenage model at his mansion near Lancaster.

"He smells of Obsession afterwards by Calvin Klein. The smell now always makes me feel sick," she said.

She said that since she was raped by the millionaire she had done promotional work for Calvin Klein and it had brought back "horrible memories".

She denied she had ever been seen being on affectionate terms with Oyston. And when asked if she had ever said she intended to marry him she replied: "After he had raped me? That would be absurd."

But the woman agreed that since the alleged rape in 1988 she had met Mr Oyston on occasions in London where she had gone to work.

The woman broke down in tears as Anthony Scriven QC, for the defence, questioned her over her early working life and the date on which she said she joined the Manchester modelling agency, Model Team, whose owner, Peter Martin, introduced her to Mr Oyston.

She said: "They have had private investigators asking my friends when I was 10 years old if I was a virgin. They have gone through my personal life with private investigators and reporters turning up... tearing my whole life apart."

In another tearful outburst during several hours of cross-examination, she insisted: "This incident did happen in 1988 when I was 17-years-old. Who is on trial?"

Later, as Mr Scriven questioned her about working in a fashion shop in her home town during the time she claims the incident took place, she told him angrily: "What a waste of time."

The woman, with close-cropped blonde hair, insisted she had joined the Manchester agency while still working part-time for the fashion shop.

But she admitted that at an earlier magistrates' court committal hearing, she had lied under oath to knock two years off her age.

She told the court: "I have always lied about my age. Ask 100 people and 90 will tell you women always lie about their age."

"I am in the modelling business. Certain clients ask for girls of a certain age. Some girls would lie and make out they are younger or older to get a certain job. Girls in their thirties would say they are 22."

She also admitted to Mr Scriven that she could not remember the day or month or the season of the year when the rape had taken place, even though she agreed it was "the most traumatic event" of her life.

The jury of eight women and four men was told during Mr Scriven's questioning that the case was a re-trial of the allegations involving the first woman after a jury at Manchester Crown Court failed to reach a verdict on the rape charge and cleared Oyston of an accusation that he indecently assaulted her.

The case continues.

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news

Woman in coma allowed to die

ROS WYNNE-JONES

A woman who has been in a persistent vegetative state for the past four years is to be allowed to die after a court ruled yesterday that doctors could stop artificially feeding her.

In a historic ruling, Lord Cameron of Lochbroom said treatment of Janet Johnston, who has been in PVS since 1992 as a result of seizures she suffered after taking a drugs overdose, could be discontinued.

PVS, as distinct from a coma, is defined by the Royal College of Physicians as where a patient has been in a vegetative state, unaware of state or environment, for more than 12 months.

Relatives said the decision had been agonising. Peter Johnston, who wanted his wife to die with dignity, wept as he heard the court's ruling. "It is the right decision," he said from his home in Lanarkshire. "I knew it was coming, but it is so hard to take. Janet was my only love and we were together for thirty years, but it will be a big relief when she finally gets peace."

In Scotland's first "right to die" ruling, Lord Cameron told the Court of Session in Edinburgh: "I am satisfied from the evidence that it is no longer possible to suggest that the continuance of the treatment... is of any benefit to her."

His judgment was postponed for a day after a lawyer ap-

pointed to represent Mrs Johnston's interests made a final appeal for her life. Colin McEachran QC said there were many cases of coma victims showing signs of recovery after many months and that science always offered hope.

Lord Cameron, however, said it would be a "dereliction of the court's duty" not to grant the ruling sought by the Law Hospital NHS Trust in Lanarkshire, allowing her to die.

The hospital, supported by medical opinion from four independent sources, had told the court that Mrs Johnston was in a "persistent vegetative state with no prospect of recovery".

Dr John Browning, Law Hospital's medical director, said once artificial feeding is withdrawn Mrs Johnston would be expected to die within 10 to 14 days. "These steps will be handled with compassion and sensitivity," he added.

As news of yesterday's ruling reached families with experience of parents and children in PVS, some reacted with anger and disbelief. Eileen Baldwin, whose daughter came round from a seven-month coma, condemned yesterday's decision as "like murder". Mrs Baldwin, of Gravesend, said: "I would never have given up."

But Mr Johnston said: "Nobody understands how I feel... you just couldn't understand the stress and the pain."



Star attraction: Workers for Southern Water preparing Brighton's Victorian sewers for guided tours of the underground system during the annual Brighton Festival next month. The company says the East Sussex town's tours are a sell-out. Photograph: Stewart Goldstein

'Hostility' of Labour MP to Blair aide

MICHAEL STREETER

A Labour MP told the High Court yesterday of his "hostility" towards Tony Blair's press secretary, Alistair Campbell.

George Galloway, MP for Glasgow Hillhead, was giving evidence for Tory member Rupert Allason, who is suing Mr Campbell, political journalist Andy McSmith and Mirror Group Newspapers for malicious falsehood.

Allason claims that Campbell, then the *Daily Mirror's* political editor, and former colleague McSmith, targeted him by falsely writing that 50 MPs had signed an early day motion attacking the member for Tory over libel damages he had received from MGN. All three defendants deny the claims, which arise from an article in the *Daily Mirror* on 20 November 1992.

Mr Galloway told of the personal history between himself, Mr Campbell, and former Mirror Group owner Robert Maxwell. "My feelings are... a man who can serve with such gusto the greatest thief of the 20th century in this country is a person to be kept a wary eye on," he added. "I always kept a weather eye on what he was up to, which was generally no good." The case continues.

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IND

EU rebuke for Major over beef plans delay

STEVE BOGGAN and KATHERINE BUTLER

John Major was given a humiliating rebuke by Jacques Santer, the European Union President, yesterday as the Prime Minister admitted to farmers that the beef debacle was the "biggest crisis" he had ever faced.

In a message to Mr Major, Mr Santer warned that Britain's delay in presenting plans to wipe out "mad-cow disease" was seriously damaging prospects for an early lifting of the EU ban.

European Commission officials were said to have been "amazed" yesterday when Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Minister, arrived for talks with Franz Fischler, the EU Agriculture Commissioner, with no new plans for ending the crisis. The National Farmers'

Union, frustrated at the minister's failure to act, lodged an application for judicial review of the ban in the High Court, to be followed by a direct application to the European Court of Justice next week which will include a claim for damages likely to run into hundreds of millions of pounds.

Mr Major and Mr Hogg described a meeting with NFU members at Downing Street yesterday as "constructive" but Mr Hogg admitted later that he did not expect an early lifting of the ban. Sources at the meeting said Mr Major was clearly disturbed by the effect on Britain's beef industry, describing it as his biggest crisis.

A spokeswoman for the NFU in Scotland said: "Our members cannot confirm the words precisely, but he definitely said something to that effect."

In his plea for action to Mr Major - delivered via Stephen Wall, Britain's permanent representative at the EU - Mr Santer warned that the cost of compensating British farmers could not be included in the EU's draft budget for 1997, due to be tabled next week, without British figures on numbers of animals to be slaughtered.

Britain has asked that 70 per cent of compensation payments be met by the EU farm budget. But, with five days to go before talks in Luxembourg aimed at ending the crisis, the Commission has still received no written details of how Britain intends to stamp out the disease.

Mr Santer emphasised to Mr Major that the Commission had no desire to prolong the ban but he warned that EU officials, who have the last word, would not begin to consider a relax-

ation, let alone a lifting of the boycott, in the absence of a fresh plan.

A spokesman for Mr Santer said: "We must see proposals for supplementary measures, but this is so complicated and so difficult that the sooner the better. Today rather than tomorrow."

Lawyers for the National Farmers' Union believe their challenges to the EU directives implementing the ban have a high chance of success. Their judicial review application is aimed at the Ministry of Agriculture and Customs and Excise, as agents of the EU in Britain.

Counsel for all parties are expected to ask a High Court judge to refer questions of law to the European Court. However, that route and the direct application could take months to be heard.

Humans and cows linked by genes

CHARLES ARTHUR Science Correspondent

A genetic similarity between cows and humans may mean that we can catch mad cow disease by eating infected beef, yet be at no risk of the equivalent disease, scrapie, from sheep, according to new research.

A team of British scientists in Oxford has discovered a surprising relation in one aspect of a particular gene in cows and hominoids (such as humans, gorillas and chimpanzees). Called the PrP gene, it makes the "prion" protein, which is known to become misshapen and then builds up in the brains and spinal cords of cows with bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), or in humans with Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease

(CJD). Both diseases cause loss of coordination, have no known treatment, and are always fatal.

But the genetic similarity in the PrP gene does not occur between hominoids and sheep, according to the scientists, from the University of Oxford's department of zoology and the National Environment Research Council's Institute of Virology. This difference may explain why humans have never developed CJD from eating sheep infected with scrapie, the equivalent of BSE or CJD, although it has existed for 200 years.

But the similarity between cows and humans might also explain the cause of 10 recent cases of CJD in young adults. The suggestion by expert advisers that the cases might have been caused by exposure to infected

beef products sparked off the BSE crisis a month ago.

The scientists analysed the PrP genes by looking at their "sequence". Every protein is made up of long chains of shorter molecules, called amino acids. The gene determines the content and sequence of amino acids in the eventual protein.

At two points in the PrP protein sequence, cows and humans have substituted particular amino acids for others found in other mammals. The probability of this being a chance event is less than 0.5 per cent, according to Mark Pagel, who led the project.

"It doesn't mean that cows and humans have a common ancestor," said Dr Pagel yesterday. "When we reconstruct the likely evolutionary events, the only

explanation is that humans and cows have independently evolved these substitutions. There must be a positive reason for it - which means this substitution gave our human ancestors, and cows, an advantage in natural selection. That would explain how it has spread throughout the species."

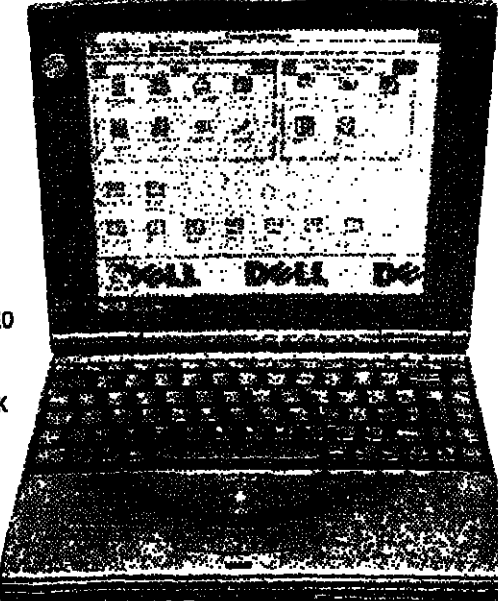
He does not know what the advantage might be, though the team suggests in the science journal *Nature* that it could in the past have given some resistance against "prion diseases" such as CJD and BSE by making it harder to catch prion diseases from other species.

Equally, the substitutions could have had some positive effect on the function of PrP, which recent research suggests helps keep vital nerve cells alive.

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High-tech bra may help spot cancer

JOJO MOYES

A fibre-optic brassiere that avoids using potentially harmful X-rays could soon be used to help detect breast cancer. Scientists at University College London are due "within months" to complete a movable bedside imager that uses near-infrared (NIR) light to see inside the soft tissues of the body.

Instead of conventional X-ray mammography, the imager uses 32 fibres attached around the breast to read and feed back any changes taking place. "NIR imaging should provide an excellent method of pre-screening for breast cancer because it is particularly good at picking up the changes associated with the development of small tumours," said Professor David Delpy, who is heading the development team within the medical physics and bio-engineering department at UCL. The number of blood vessels increases significantly around a growing tumour and NIR can track haemoglobin, the red pigment in blood.

X-rays are less effective at spotting small tumours. They detect the small calcifications found in a tumour, but small ones often don't contain many of these," said Prof Delpy, who introduced the method at yesterday's conference, *Medical Engineering: Improving the Quality of Life*, at the Royal Society of Medicine in London.

Working with NIR light is difficult because breast tissue absorbs so much of the light energy that the detecting fibres are almost counting single photons — the smallest possible amounts of light.

But NIR light is completely harmless and can be used repeatedly or continuously, even on pregnant women. It also avoids the need for compression

of the breast, which many women find painful and off-putting.

It may also become a useful tool for brain scanning, because it can identify damaged areas caused by a blow to the head. The UCL team is already using a larger, stationary version of the NIR system to monitor the brains of premature babies to identify early symptoms of damage.

"At the moment it looks a little like an Indian head-dress, with the fibres being held in place around the head by an elastic strip and double-sided tape," said Prof Delpy.

"At 26/27 weeks gestation babies have a head measurement of 7 cm... and the system allows us to monitor the brain in a non-invasive and totally safe manner. You can leave it on continuously. You are probably getting as much infrared light on your head now as you would get from the system."

A number of major commercial manufacturers have shown an interest in the movable prototype, which is due for completion in six to seven months and whose development is being partly funded by the Wellcome Trust.

According to Professor Delpy, the overall cost of the technology for the new system was already in place, he said, and should be manufactured quite easily.

"It's not a competitor for X-ray mammography. It's just meant to complement it. If it works I would see someone having an X-ray mammograph and an optical image at the same time," he added.

"There's no problem of accumulation radiation growth so you could come back every six months and could then look for differences in the scans."



Co-op funeral director Keith Clegg with the canal boat *Savile*, which will soon be offering residents of Calderdale, Yorkshire, a peaceful final journey by taking a coffin and up to 12 mourners to the gates of Elland Crematorium. Photograph: Ross Parry



ITV's real-life crime 'a bit tacky'

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Media Correspondent

ITV was criticised by the Independent Television Commission yesterday in its annual performance review for 1995 for focusing "too frequently on police work and crime", although the overall quality of its drama was praised.

Peter Rogers, chief executive of the ITC, said that *Camera Action Live* and *Police, Camera, Action!* had given additional concern because their use of closed-circuit television footage had raised privacy issues. While the faces of people in criminal or "dubious" circumstances had been blurred out, neighbours, family or friends could have recognised their identity from their clothes or other clues.

Camera Action Live, ITV's November documentary following the work of police throughout Britain on a Satur-

The eleven police and crime shows running on view this week			
	Monday: <i>Blue Heelers</i> Australian police soap <i>Police, Camera, Action!</i> Real-life police work on the streets	Tuesday: <i>The Bill</i> Long-run	Wednesday: Crime drama set in police station <i>The Cook Report</i> Investigative series exposing villains
	Thursday: <i>The Bill</i> <i>Prisoner</i> Call Block H Australian	Friday: <i>The Bill</i> <i>Saturday</i> <i>The Governor</i> Drama	Sunday: <i>The Knock</i> New customs and excise drama <i>Sledgehammer</i> US detective comedy

day night — carpeted by critics — was also slated by Mr Rogers on quality grounds, who said he "was not impressed with the quality". He added that some of the real-life programmes were "very patchy indeed".

"We have nothing against cheap programming if it works well, but some of it is a bit tacky."

But an ITV network centre spokeswoman yesterday defended the channel, saying: "Crime dramas are enormous-

ly popular with viewers. If you go into any bookshop it is the mystery, crime and related material which people are buying."

The ITC also warned of a "noticeable shift" in the overall balance of the ITV schedule toward entertainment-led programmes. Last year the channel ran more drama, entertainment and "light" factual programmes, while education, religion and arts were "often in the margins of the schedule".

Mr Rogers said that, compared with 1994, ITV ran an average extra 27 minutes a week of drama and 46 minutes a week of entertainment, but cut back on documentaries by an average 8 minutes a week and on arts by an average 4 minutes. He warned: "I think the balance has shifted. It is true to say it is at, or approaching, the limits of what it should be."

However, ITV was praised for maintaining high-quality

original drama at the heart of its peak-time schedule and for providing nine of the ten most viewed dramas (excluding serials) in 1995.

Channel 4 was rebuked by the ITC for not producing enough original material and for too many repeats. But it did retain a "distinctive character" and, as required in its licence, provided a good proportion of programmes for tastes and interests not generally catered for by ITV.

Blood service is £3m in debt

LOUISE JURY

The blood service in England is millions of pounds in debt, despite a big shake-up designed to improve efficiency and cut costs. The debts are understood to exceed £3m and could be higher, a source said.

The National Blood Authority (NBA), which runs the service, may have to ask Stephen Dorrell, Secretary of State for Health, for extra cash. Despite alarm among staff, an authority spokesman denied it was in financial difficulty.

A business plan seen by the *Independent* shows the northern zone, one of three covering the country, expects to have a deficit of £1m this year. The zone has already used £1.1m of "transitional funding" from the Health Department to carry out reforms and will have to ask for more, the plan says.

Sources say the western and south Midlands zone is £1.5m over budget and the figure is expected to be higher in the London and South-east region, which has traditionally had to "import" stocks from other parts of the country because of a shortage of donors.

A Manufacturing Science and Finance union spokeswoman said members were going home each day with work unfinished. "They are very concerned. It indicates there is a financial squeeze."

The figures have emerged as the service is undergoing upheaval, with the work of the regional transfusion centres streamlined following management consultant recommendations which identified potential savings of £10m.

Scientists fear the deficit could further delay introduction of more reliable testing for hepatitis B and HTLV-1, a virus type which can cause cancer and neurological illnesses.

A number of problems have contributed to the budgetary shortfall, including the Tuta bag scandal last summer, when new, cheaper blood bags were withdrawn because of contamination. The move was supposed to save the service £700,000 a year, but this was forfeited when managers had to return to previous suppliers.

BAFTA backs 21 winners from the BBC



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Hartswood Films
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BBC 2 |
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BBC 2 | DENNIS POTTER AWARD
ROY CLARKE |
| LOW GRADE AWARD FOR A SIGNIFICANT AND POPULAR TELEVISION PROGRAMME
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BBC Bristol
BBC 1 | CHILDREN'S PROGRAMME (FACTUAL)
SHORT CHANGE
Roy Milani
BBC 2 |
| RICHARD DIMBLEBY AWARD FOR THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSONAL CONTRIBUTION ON SCREEN IN FACTUAL TELEVISION
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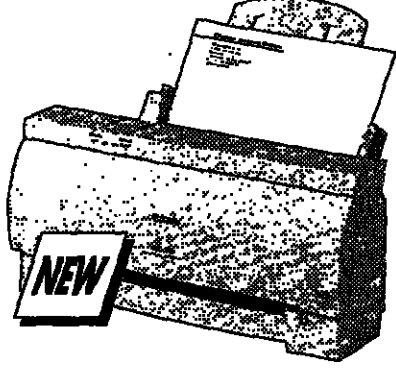
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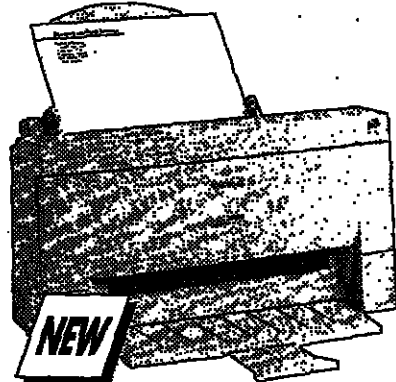


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Star appointment: Richard Wilson, the actor, being installed as rector of the University of Glasgow yesterday. The ceremony in Bute Hall followed a procession of the Chancellor, Principal and staff. Photograph: Jeremy Sutton Hibbert

Nurses' congress: Violent or sexual offenders 'should be excluded'

Life ban demanded for criminal staff

BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

The Royal College of Nursing yesterday demanded that nurses who have committed serious criminal offences – especially against patients – should not be re-admitted to the profession. The resolution, passed by 437 votes to four, with four abstentions, follows a controversial decision last month by the United Kingdom Central Council on Nursing to reinstate Yuen How Choy, a 50-year-old convicted rapist.

Christine Hancock, general secretary of the college, said that while the RCN motion did not specify which offences should be covered by the ban, sexual and violent attacks on

patients were clearly the "bottom line".

In 1972 Mr Choy, a former RCN member and a nurse specialising in mental health, drugged a patient in order to have sex with her and 11 years later raped a former patient in her home.

Without naming Mr Choy, Ms Hancock said: "There are some crimes where you can demonstrate that someone has been treated and cured. I know of no treatment for the assault and rape of patients."

She said the college had sent out a very strong message that nurses who had abused the trust of vulnerable people should not be allowed to practice.

Where offences did not in-

volve patients, there might be, for instance, a case for excluding from the ban people who had been provoked into domestic violence, she said.

In the debate, Maria Nicholson, of Wycombe and Amersham, disclosed that a close friend had been raped at the age of four and again at nine by a health care worker. Ms Nicholson said the woman had never forgotten the experience.

"She lives with it day after day after day," Ms Nicholson said. "The UKCC had abused its position of trust and she called for a far tougher approach."

Rod Thomson, a health visitor from Merseyside, said: "We cannot have a situation where rapists, murderers and paedophiles are still on the regis-

ter, particularly paedophiles. Even when paedophiles were undergoing therapy it proved very difficult for them to stop abusing children, he said.

Proposing the motion, Jessica Cudmore, a students' representative, said the relationship between nurses and patients should not be abused, especially as nursing often involved "intimate and invasive" procedures.

Before they were trained, nurses were asked to guarantee that they were of good character. "What is the point in that if it is not maintained after registration?" she asked. College officials said they would apply next week for a judicial review of the decision by the UKCC to readmit Mr Choy.

Law allowing 'living wills' urged

BARRIE CLEMENT

Nurses yesterday called for a law backing "living wills" to allow patients the right to "die with dignity." A majority of RCN delegates voted, three to one, to give patients the right to refuse treatment which artificially prolongs life, thus reversing previous union policy.

The decision brings the col-

lege into line with the British Medical Association and the Patients' Association.

Bob Halliwell, a nurse specialising in learning disabilities, said that people should be allowed in advance to forego treatment such as "invasive or painful therapies." Living wills, or "advance directives" as they are known in the medical profession, also allow patients to

give their permission for treatment in advance, he said.

Delegates insisted they were not endorsing euthanasia – living wills provided for "inaction" rather than a positive act to end life. Mr Halliwell said it would not permit patients to ask others to do anything illegal.

The wills would allow those suffering from a mental disorder to decide their treatment in

advance of a relapse. Mr Halliwell said. In cases of intellectual deterioration the directives could be drawn up when the patient was capable of making the decision.

Mr Halliwell said the absence of legal status for advance directives often leaves health-care professionals, carers and others "in positions of uncertainty, anxiety and conflict".

Losing out to paper shufflers

Senior nurses with vital clinical experience are being made redundant as part of a drive to cut back on the "grey suits" and "paper shufflers" in the health service, according to the Royal College of Nursing.

In targeting National Health Service employees on more than £20,000 a year, trusts are axing senior ward sisters, intensive-care staff and other specialist nurses, the college has discovered.

The RCN congress heard that the Government's policy of cutting management costs by 5 per cent was seriously affecting patient care. The college's national council was instructed by delegates to investigate the impact of the cuts on nursing.

Christine Hancock, RCN general secretary, said Stephen Dorrell, Secretary of State for Health, had confirmed in a meeting last month that nurses were not meant to be under threat and that he would monitor application of the policy.

Proposing the motion Jacqueline Filkins, of Carlisle NHS trust, said that many senior grades had a management component in their job and were therefore vulnerable to redun-

dancy. Even staff nurses were expected to manage resources, said Ms Filkins, nursing representative on her trust board.

She said the Government did not intend to target nurses, but trusts were facing considerable financial difficulties and had misinterpreted ministerial policy: "Trusts are losing vital leadership, not just the shufflers of papers."

Many of the people... have extensive knowledge and practical experience. Expertise is being lost to the trusts."

She knew of more than 100 senior nurses in trusts who had been made redundant, but that was the "tip of the iceberg".

A spokesman for the Department of Health confirmed that the jobs of employees on more than £20,000 a year were under review, but that the exercise excluded those in clinical specialisms, clinical teaching staff or managing community nurse teams of fewer than 20 people.

He said the department would reissue guidance to trusts later this year which would "consolidate" advice already given by the Audit Commission.

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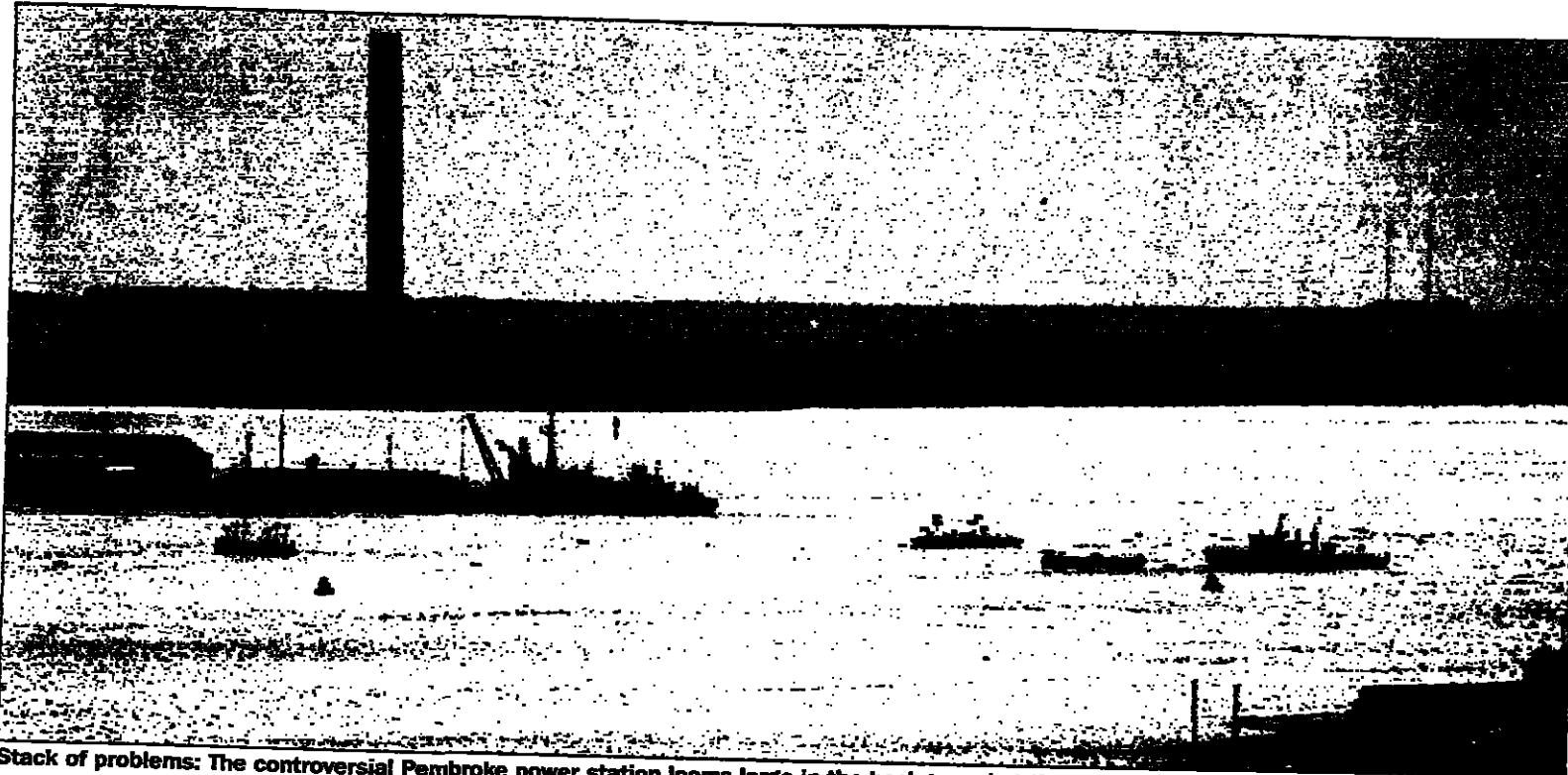
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'Dirtiest' fuel fury of oil spill community



Stack of problems: The controversial Pembroke power station looms large in the background at the port of Milford Haven. Photograph: Rob Stratton

MICHAEL PRESTAGE and NICHOLAS SCHOON

National Power has been accused of trying to blackmail a West Wales community, still reeling from the *Sea Empress* oil disaster, into accepting the burning locally of Orimulsion - dubbed the world's dirtiest fuel.

The alternative, it is claimed, is the closure of Pembroke power station with 150 jobs put at risk. But locals, who saw the area's spectacular coastline ravaged by the recent spill, are outraged by the company's actions.

As a petition signed by more than 100,000 people demanding an independent inquiry into the *Sea Empress* catastrophe was handed in at 10 Downing Street, campaigners attacked National Power plans to burn Orimulsion and use the Milford Haven port where the supertanker went aground.

John Cutting, who runs a yachting holiday company, said: "The general feeling locally about National Power's plans is one of horror. The *Sea Empress* has galvanised people into

taking action and the company's attempts to pacify us have failed."

Campaigners are wary of assurances about the fuel and are concerned about the prospect of tankers carrying it into Milford Haven. They say that tourism is worth far more to the local economy.

A crucial stage in the fight comes on 2 May when Pembroke County Council's planning committee considers proposals for a new jetty at the port. Opposition groups want councillors to refuse permission and force a public inquiry.

Since last month, no electricity has been produced at the oil-burning power station. Given the go-ahead, National Power says it will invest £500m and reopen the plant in 1999. David Jackson, the station manager, said: "It would be a tragedy if we allowed our proper and natural concern following an ecological disaster to trigger an economic disaster."

Orimulsion is a mix of water and bitumen from huge reserves lying beneath Venezuela. The fuel is produced by Britor,

a subsidiary of the Venezuelan State oil company, and - importantly for National Power - is cheap.

National Power - who have engaged in a major public relations campaign - would not discuss figures, but the Pembroke plant could switch to full capacity and be the second largest generating station in the country if it is allowed to burn the controversial fuel.

But Gordon Jones, of Friends of the Earth Cymru, has repeatedly called for the scheme to be rejected believing it to be badly flawed and discredited. "The *Sea Empress* showed that the authorities were incapable of containing an oil spill. Orimulsion would prove much more difficult to deal with," he warned.

Meanwhile, yesterday's *Sea Empress* protest at Downing Street was backed by a call in the Commons for a public inquiry by Pembroke's Labour MP, Nick Ainger. So far, the Government has only agreed to an investigation by the Department of Transport's Marine Accident Investigation Branch.

Dead Sea Scroll goes public on the Internet

The original 1,000-year-old Dead Sea Scroll is being made available for inspection for the first time - on the Internet.

Modern technology has provided a breakthrough for scholars anxious to share unique ancient documents, but worried about them being ruined by over-handling. The priceless document has until now been available only within the confines of Cambridge University. Thanks to the information superhighway, it is now accessible to millions of ordinary people.

The computer network means the scroll can not only be studied simultaneously by scholars

around the world, but also viewed in minute detail by casual surfers.

The scroll is one of the first fragments of ancient material to be put on the information superhighway by the university.

The others selected include ancient letters, books and marriage contracts concerning life in the Middle East a thousand years ago. They all come from Cambridge's Taylor-Schechter Genizah Collection.

Dr Stefan Reif, director of the collection's research unit, said: "This could open up a whole new era of international collaboration."



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By John Fuller

The seal's head in the calm
Turns to inspect the shore,
The road down to the farm
Is grass, is grass.
We've learned to think: no more.

But when the hinges tighten,
When the sea grows rough,
As the waters whiten,
As the chained gate rusts:
One look is always enough.

John Fuller's *Stones and Fire* (Chatto, £7.99) is his 13th collection of poetry and appears just ahead of his *Collected Poems*, to be published next year. A fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, since the mid-1960s, he is one of the most prolific and brilliant poets of his generation whose influence has left a mark of such tremendous importance on younger poets, many of whom were his pupils, that a traceable Movement is discernible. As always, the apparent simplicity of his verse serves to deceive and delight.

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Troop carrier blamed for deaths of troops

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY
Defence Correspondent

The families of four British soldiers killed when their armoured troop carriers crashed off mountain roads in Bosnia have launched their own investigation after the Ministry of Defence's board of inquiry blamed the drivers for the two accidents.

The inquiry, which took 11 months to report, contradicted a United Nations police report which absolved the driver of the first vehicle from any blame.

The parents of the dead soldiers are convinced that the Saxon armoured vehicles were unsuitable for the rough mountain tracks around the Muslim enclave of Gorazde. The 11-ton four-wheeled Saxons were used in Gorazde because the Serbs considered the tracked Warrior fighting vehicles too intimidating, and the British Army had no more suitable vehicle immediately available. Questions about their use in Bosnia have been raised in Parliament this week.

A BBC South documentary to be screened for the first time tonight follows Geoff Armstrong, the father of Phillip who died in the second of two accidents, aged 21. Christopher Turner, 18, and Martin Dowdell, 19, the driver, also died when their vehicle rolled down a mountainside on 12 September 1994. In *A Foreign Field*, the BBC team interviewed a Bosnian army soldier who described hearing the screams of the soldiers inside the vehicle as it tumbled 500 metres to destruction.

In the first accident, three days earlier, Ben Hinton, 22, was killed and three comrades seriously injured. The UN military police concluded that the



Use of the Saxon, top, is being questioned. Killed in the accidents, clockwise from top left: Phillip Armstrong, Martin Dowdell, Ben Hinton, Christopher Turner

edge of the road, which was only 2cm wider than the vehicle, had given way.

Ben's father, Mike Hinton, said: "You can't help feeling that

two very similar accidents within three kilometres of each other and three days of each other points to some fundamental flaw in the operating procedure,

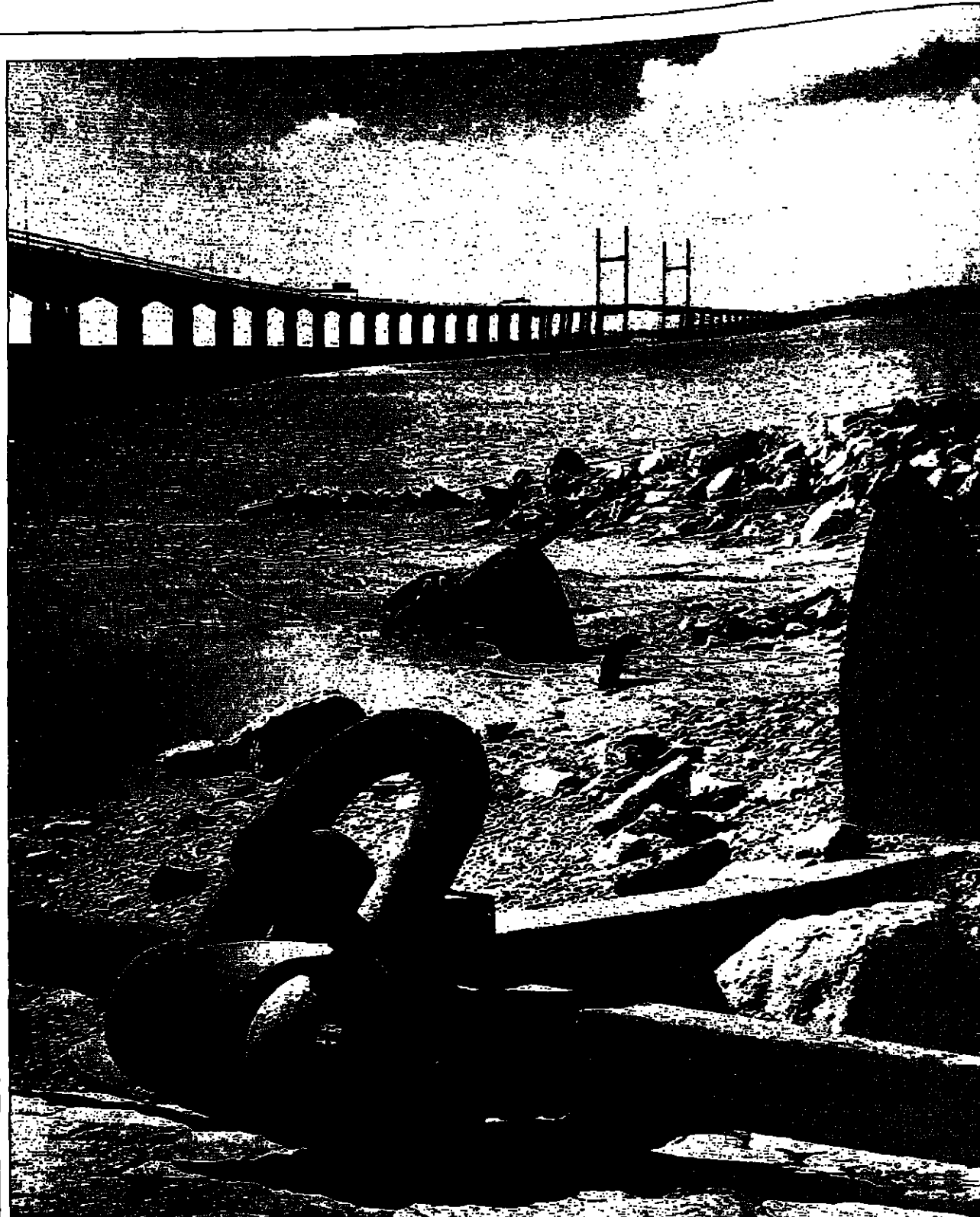
and to us that means matching the vehicle to the track."

All the soldiers were from the Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment. Mark Jones, a soldier in the regiment, said: "Saxon was just basic. They were horrible. It was OK when we had Saxons in Ireland and they were on a road, but they just didn't seem the right sort of vehicle to be taking up mountains."

Major General Jonathan Dean, a former head of armoured-vehicle procurement in the Army, said: "We wanted a basic armoured bus which would transport men around the battlefield bearing in mind the battlefield was expected to be the north German Plain. This vehicle was deemed eminently suitable. It has reasonable cross-country mobility, is reasonably reliable and it was certainly cheap."

The best vehicles for the terrain around Gorazde were light-tracked armoured vehicles such as the Scimitar or Spartan, or unarmoured Land Rovers. The heavy Warrior fighting vehicles would not have been able to get up the tracks, but a former commanding officer of the Royal Hampshire Regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Mike Reeve-Tucker, described the use of Saxons on "very steep and rather dodgy tracks" as "debatable".

Mr Armstrong was more critical. "It was possibly the worst place to be stationed in Bosnia and to get these vehicles up these tracks - virtually on top of a mountain - I think somebody in the regiment, some senior officers, and the MoD should have had the guts to admit to themselves that these Saxons were never meant to do this."



Time span: Final touches are made to a second crossing over the River Severn ahead of tomorrow's deadline for completion of work on the four-year project to build a three-mile link between England and Wales. Photograph: Ian Newton

Training vouchers plan

ROGER TRAPP

Air Miles-type vouchers, designed to encourage individuals and organisations to pay more attention to training and education themselves continually, are being planned as part of a campaign to "market learning like washing powder" and create a "learning society" in Britain by the year 2000.

The voucher scheme has not been finalised. As envisaged, it would link high-street retailers with education providers to give customers money off learning programmes around the country.

It is just one of a number of initiatives being proposed under the Campaign For Learning, launched in the City of London yesterday. The campaign is backed by the Government, education providers and

business leaders, such as the BA chairman and incoming president of the Confederation of British Industry, Sir Colin Marshall, and Rover Group's chief executive, John Towers.

It seeks to halt Britain's slide down the world's economic league tables by changing attitudes towards learning.

Sir Christopher Ball, chairman of the campaign, said at the event, which was addressed by the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, Gillian Shephard, that the "mission is to persuade people that they should care about their personal learning in the same way that they we are all gradually learning to care about the environment and our own health."

The initiative was organised by the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures & Commerce, where

Sir Christopher is director of learning, and has sufficient funds to take it until the year 2000. But it hopes to obtain £4m a year from business to finance the marketing effort, which is to be headed by the former Lever Brothers chief executive Andrew Seth.

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Blueprint drawn up for reform of Lords

JOHN RENTOUL
Political Correspondent

If Tony Blair becomes prime minister, he should appoint 63 new Labour peers to create a "fair" and "democratic" House of Lords, and give a Cabinet minister responsibility for his ambitious programme of constitutional changes, according to an influential think-tank.

A group of former civil servants set out today a detailed blueprint for giving effect to the Labour leader's promise to take away the voting rights of hereditary peers.

A second report examines the changes to Whitehall machinery needed to push through reform of the Lords, devolution of power to a Scottish parliament and English regions, a Freedom of Information Act, new human rights law and referendums on changing the voting system and, possibly, a European single currency.

On the Lords, Mr Blair is urged to convene a "Party Leader's Conference" to seek all-party consensus for long-term reform. But the report warns that simply removing hereditary peers would be unsustainable even as a short-term measure.

Charges a "giant quango" would be created should be met by opening up the appointments system and agreeing a formula for party strengths, which "could be determined in the short term on the basis of the party in government having a majority of one over the nearest opposition party".

This would mean creating 63 Labour peers, as against the 200 required to give Labour a majority over all parties and cross-bench peers. Jack Straw, the shadow Home Secretary, recently ruled out creating large numbers of new peers.

The blueprint, including a draft Parliament Bill, has been drawn up by the Constitution Unit, a research body funded by a number of trusts, including the Joseph Rowntree and Nuffield foundations.

Although the unit is independent, its purpose is to examine proposals to reform the United Kingdom's constitution – most of which come from the Labour and Liberal Democrat parties.

Its committee includes MPs from all three main parties, but the chairman, Professor James Cornford, is the former head of the left-leaning Policy Institute for Public Policy Research.



Ceasefire: Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, announcing the firearms amnesty in central London yesterday

Photograph: Colin McKillop

Dunblane prompts 28-day guns amnesty

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

A national firearms amnesty is to take place in June in the wake of the massacre of the Dunblane children. The Home Secretary announced yesterday.

But while Michael Howard was confident the move would save lives, he accepted it could not prevent a similar tragedy at

the hands of a deranged gunman – such as Thomas Hamilton who killed the 16 children and their teacher.

"No one is suggesting a firearms amnesty is a panacea in relation to crime that can be committed with guns. It is not – but it can play a part," he said at the launch of the amnesty in London. "Every gun that is removed out of people's homes

and off the streets is one fewer potential threat, one less potential tragedy or one less potential crime."

The amnesty throughout England, Scotland and Wales will allow anyone to hand in any illegally or legally held guns and ammunition to police without fear of prosecution – provided that the weapons have not been used in any crime. Possession of

illegal firearms can normally lead to sentences of up to 10 years in prison and fines. The amnesty will run from 3 to 30 June. People will also be able to report anyone they suspect of holding illegal weapons. Those found with weapons during the period will still be covered by the amnesty.

During the last weapons amnesty, which followed the

1987 Hungerford massacre, 48,000 weapons were handed in.

Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary, repeated Mr Howard's message north of the border: "The people of Scotland have the most compelling of reasons for participating in this amnesty. Every firearm, no matter how old, which is held in the community is a weapon that could potentially kill."

NEC clears Howarth to stand for Labour

JOHN RENTOUL

Labour's ruling National Executive Committee yesterday cleared the way for Alan Howarth, the MP who defected from the Tories last October, to seek a seat for the next election.

The Stratford-upon-Avon MP had been technically prevented from standing for Labour because of a rule which says candidates must have been party members for at least two years. But Tony Blair, the Labour leader, persuaded the NEC, by 15 votes to 5 to rule that Mr Howarth's situation was "exceptional" because, as a Labour MP, he is already a member of the Parliamentary Labour Party.

Mr Howarth is believed to be interested in a number of northern seats. Party members in West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, have already expressed fears

that the leadership intends to impose him as their candidate.

Yesterday's decision clears the way for Mr Howarth to be chosen in the few remaining ballots of local party members, but it also allows the leadership to "appoint" him as a candidate for a constituency if a general election is called before ballots can be organised.

A spokesman said the party had taken legal advice on its interpretation of the rules. The NEC decided in favour of permitting him to put his name forward because of his "right and principled stand" in switching from the Tories.

The NEC also voted narrowly to appoint a panel to interview candidates for Swindon North and effectively decide between Michael Wilks, who won the original ballot, and Jim D'Avila, who claimed irregularities.

Right-wing Tories find fault in divorce changes

Tory opponents of the Government's divorce law reforms yesterday lambasted the changes as rendering marriage vows meaningless and even, it was claimed, ending 2,000 years of basting divorce legislation on the "Christian inheritance".

Edward Leigh, a former minister, said trying to solve problems on the basis of "no pain, no shame and no apology" as the Family Law Bill proposed, would make rebuilding relationships even more difficult. Debate on a move, led by Mr Leigh, to keep adultery and intolerable behaviour as grounds for divorce while ending the so-called "quickie" divorce was largely confined to the Conservative benches.

"This is a very solemn moment in our history," said the right-wing MP. "Our law in this area for the best part of 2,000 years has been based on our Judeo-Christian inheritance. Do

- ☐ Bill abolishes 'Christian inheritance'
- ☐ Children suffer most from separation

we wish to sweep that all away?"

Mr Leigh's amendments, supported by the former Cabinet ministers John Patten and John Redwood, would effectively wreck the balance struck by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Mackay, in framing the Bill.

While introducing "no fault" divorce, the measure ends "quickie divorces", so despised by the fundamentalists, and proposes a 12-month period for reflection and consideration.

Mr Leigh said the backdrop was a "crisis of marital breakdown". Each year 158,000 marriages ended in divorce – 41 per cent of marriages – and children suffered as a result.

There was mounting evidence that "the children of divorced parents tend to be worse

educated, much more likely to become unemployed and much less likely to be able to sustain a stable marriage themselves".

Mr Leigh claimed Parliament could not stop it but could lay down a "moral cornerstone" for guidance. The concept of fault should be retained "not because we want to say 'you are guilty, you should admit it' and build up bitterness in a marriage."

"If you bring in no-fault divorce, what about the bitterness of the injured party? Life isn't always about being equally to blame. Sometimes there are injured parties and what about their bitterness, what about their feeling of rejection and the denial of their rights...?"

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman, Tory MP for Lancaster and

Inside Parliament
Stephen Goodwin

a former divorce lawyer, agreed, citing the plight of the rejected lady who had supported her husband but become "middle-aged and possibly a little dull". "She would be very bitter if she was just cast aside like an old glove with no good reason given."

However another ex-divorce lawyer, Patrick Nicholls, Conservative MP for Teignbridge, said the one thing he learned fairly quickly was "that the pit of misery and unhappiness which two people locked

in deadlock in matrimony can cause each other is absolutely bottomless".

Those who were inclined to bring fault back were looking for a sort of certificate of moral righteousness, which could not work.

Recalling when couples had to go to court, he said: "There is no video nasty I've ever seen which is more squirmingly embarrassing and more heart-breaking than to see two people trying to explain to the man up there in the wig how they felt, why they had to act as they did."

Yet another former divorce lawyer, Elynor Lloyd of Plaid Cymru, said the present law was about mud-slinging and some of the mud sometimes splashed on to innocent children. Opposing Mr Leigh, he asked: "Why should private arguments about very personal things be made very public in this way, especially as it serves no useful purpose?"

MPs question lobbyists' honesty

JOHN RENTOUL
Political Correspondent

The lobbying company seen by MPs as the most effective is also rated lowest for "honesty and ethical standards", according to a confidential survey obtained by the *Independent*.

Of the 14 lobbyists in the survey, Ian Greer Associates (IGA) was named by most MPs, 65 per cent, as "very" or "quite" effective. But the firm was rated "low" or "very low" by 28 per cent of MPs for honesty and ethical standards – no other firm scored more than 7 per cent.

The survey, which offers a fascinating insight into MPs' views, has provoked a dispute between Harris Research and IGA, which is refusing to pay for a copy of the report, which Harris claims it ordered.

Harris interviewed 160 MPs at the end of last year, in order to sell the information to lobbying companies and their clients or potential clients, at a price of £950 each.

It is understood that Harris is considering legal action over its claim that Jeremy Sweeney, managing director of IGA, asked for a copy by telephone, and was sent three copies, but later refused to pay the invoice, saying he had not placed an order.

Mr Sweeney said yesterday that he could not comment on the survey's findings or on the dispute with Harris. "Ian Greer is the person you want to speak to, and he is not available to comment today," he said.

IGA, which lobbies MPs on behalf of some of Britain's biggest companies, was involved in one part of the "cash for questions" row, prompting the Government to set up Lord Nolan's inquiry into standards in public life, which led to the ban on paid advocacy by MPs.

It was alleged in 1994 that Tim Smith and Neil Hamilton, then ministers, had received £2,000 per question from the Harrods owner Mohamed Al-Fayed, through the company, in return for tabling parliamentary questions.

Both Mr Hamilton – who was forced by the Prime Minister to resign – and Ian Greer, the company's chairman and a former Conservative agent, have denied the claim and have tried to sue newspapers reporting it. But the High Court ruled last year that they could not pursue such an action because it contravened parliamentary privilege.

Two years ago, Mr Greer admitted to the Commons select committee on members' interests that he had made six "thank-you" payments to three MPs in return for introductions to potential clients. He refused to name them or say what they were paid. Such payments are now banned.

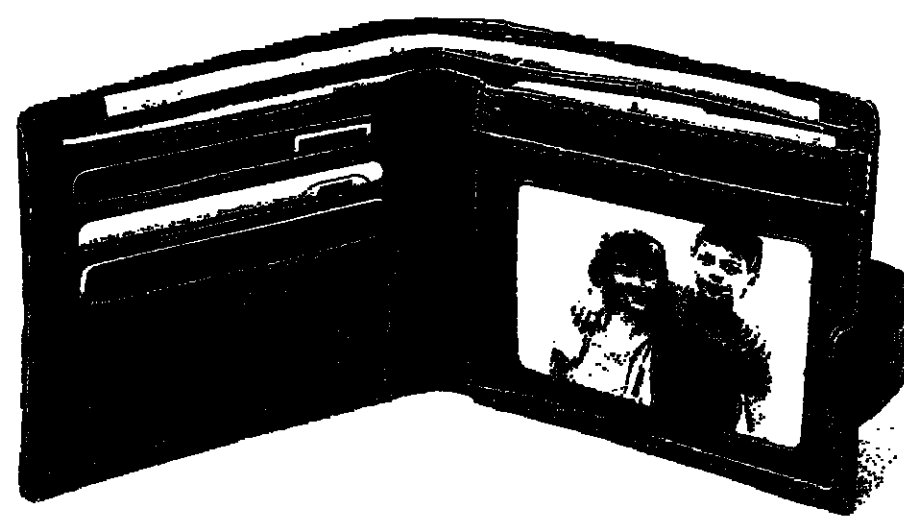
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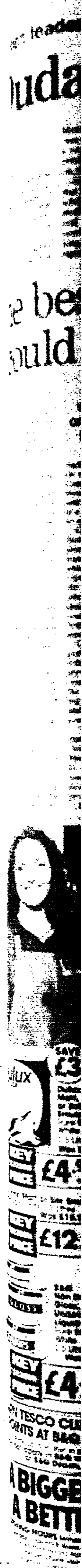
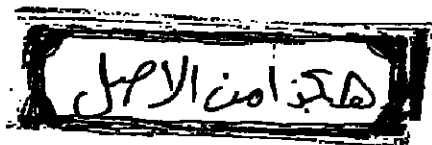
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Dudayev's heir vows to carry on the war

Obituary, page 15

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international

Oslo peace process: Shift from 'idealism to realism' as PNC leader meets Israeli demands to amend Palestinian charter

Arafat wins historic vote

PATRICK COCKBURN
Gaza

The Palestinian parliament in exile last night voted to remove from its charter clauses calling for armed struggle to replace Israel with a Palestinian state. Israel has made amending or dropping the charter a condition for starting the final phase of peace talks with the Palestinians and partially withdrawing from the West Bank city of Hebron.

Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian

President, won a sweeping majority of 504 votes in the 536-seat Palestine National Council in favour of revoking the clauses. Mr Arafat needed a two-thirds majority at the PNC, which met in Gaza for the first time.

Hussan Kadr from Balata refugee camp near Nablus, said before the meeting: "I am in two minds. I am heart and soul against the old charter, but I also don't think we are getting enough for dropping it."

Earlier Mr Arafat told the

parliament that they had no choice but to change the covenant. He had in any case agreed that clauses opposing the existence of Israel would go as part of the Oslo accords in 1993. "Nobody likes to say no to Yasser Arafat," said Mr Kadr, who belongs to the Palestinian legislative council elected in January. He thought amending the charter was a shift from "idealism to realism".

Almost all the Palestinian leaders gathered in the Shawwa centre were agreed that the timing of the meeting was bad. "It sounds as if we are surrendering," said Ziyad Abu Amr, a political scientist from Bir Zeit university on the West Bank. He said that since the suicide bombings in March Israel has sealed off Gaza and the West Bank. Palestinian prisoners were still held and there has been no discussion of 850,000 Palestinians displaced because of the 1967 war.

For all Mr Arafat's attempts to be upbeat about what has been gained by the Oslo accords the Palestinian representatives have a deep sense of their own weakness. Even Leila Khalid, famed former hijacker and member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, after denouncing Oslo, said simply: "The balance of power



Vehement opposition: Hamas supporters demonstrate in Gaza yesterday as the PNC voted to abandon the armed struggle against Israel. Photograph: Reuters

Clinton hopes ceasefire in Middle East is 'close'

President Bill Clinton said yesterday that he hoped a cessation of fighting between Israel and guerrillas in Lebanon was "quite close", writes Patrick Cockburn.

During a meeting with President Elias Hrawi of Lebanon he said: "I've gotten some encouraging news that I can't announce now."

In the Middle East, Warren Christopher, the US Secretary of State, went to eastern Lebanon as part of his search for a ceasefire. Travelling by car from Damascus to Shouara, on the road to Beirut, he met

Rafiq Hariri, the Lebanese Prime Minister.

Diplomats say Syria and Israel have broadly agreed not to strike at civilian targets. The sticking point is that guerrillas from Hizbollah should be stopped from attacking Israeli forces in the Israeli-occupied zone in the south of Lebanon.

"The major controversy is over the right of the resistance to pursue its operations against the Israeli occupation troops," a Lebanese official said. He added: "Syria and Lebanon will not accept putting an end to these operations."

Mrs Khalid, allowed by Israel to return from Jordan to vote, was the most obvious symbol in Gaza yesterday of a generation of Palestinians who believed

is against us." Not unsympathetically, she outlined the pressures on Mr Arafat to amend the charter, such as the need for American money and the wish to see Mr Peres re-elected.

Mrs Khalid said her sisters had been forced to flee Tyre because of the Israeli bombardment, but nobody expected events in Lebanon to have

much impact on Palestinian affairs. Salah al-Damari, a former Palestinian military leader in south Lebanon who was captured during the 1982 Israeli invasion, said: "It's appalling. The Israelis have their own version of what is right or wrong." But as a result of Oslo, Palestinian politics are now determined by the 2.3 million

Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. The 4 million abroad - including 350,000 in Lebanon - have less and less influence.

The 14-day-old Israeli bombardment of Lebanon does make Palestinians wonder what they can expect from Shimon Peres, the Israeli Prime Minister, if he is re-elected on 29 May.

Letters page 16

Wicked little ships give the lie to Israel's moral might

Israel, we were always told, prides itself on the morality of its armed forces. "Purity of arms", we were led to believe, was the watchword of the Israeli Defence Force, an absolute mission to avoid civilian casualties in war.

For most Lebanese, any such notions died in Israel's 1978 invasion (2,000 dead, almost all civilians), Israel's 1982 invasion (around 15,700 dead, almost all civilians), the 1993 bombardment of southern Lebanon (123 civilians dead, 11 Hizbollah), or the massacre of at least 120 civilians in the UN

compound at Qana last week.

Israel has provided reasons for each bloodbath - "terrorism", mistakes, ignorance. But 15 miles down the coast from Beirut, the Israelis can be under no illusions about what they are shooting at. On a 300-yard strip of highway over the Awali river, north of Lebanon's second city, a road of burned-out cars, shell-holes and raw fear, almost every Lebanese civilian motorist is being targeted by three Israeli 488-ton Hetz-class gunboats. The captains of these 200ft vessels can clearly see their targets by day,

Robert Fisk in Rmeile on the deliberate shelling of Lebanese drivers

and at night through infra-red night vision. Their targets include ambulances, private cars, taxis and vans.

The three ships are named Hetz, the title of the class, Keshet and Romach, - Arrow, Bow and Spear - although when you drive the road all that matters is whether you see a puff of smoke from the wicked little Israeli gunboats lying a mile offshore. On Tuesday, one of the ships took a shot at the

Mercedes in which I was travelling; it exploded 100ft behind us. The same day, a shell exploded 20ft from a car carrying an Australian television crew.

So far, at least eight civilians have been wounded by this deliberate shelling, two of whom had to jump from their blazing car. Israel claims it is interdicting "terrorist" supply lines, although anyone who knows Lebanon knows the Hizbollah

have more secure trails by which to transport their Katyushas south. Those who travel the coast road are civilians, often families, and the Israelis know that.

The Israelis say the Lebanese have been told not to use the highway. And yet, civilians in Sidon have no other road on which to travel to Beirut. But like the three children and two women whom the Israelis slaughtered in an ambulance 12

days ago, the Lebanese are now apparently responsible for their own deaths if they are targeted by Israelis. The ambulance was deliberately targeted by an Israeli helicopter pilot because "it belonged to Hizbollah". Even if this was true, which it was not, what morality governs an air force which destroys three children and two young women because it dislikes the owner of the vehicle in which they are travelling?

After my latest brush with Israel's Hetz-class gunboats, I sat on the coast a little to the north and watched two of the ships go on firing at the traffic north of Sidon. What, I wondered, was going on in the minds of the captain and crew of each vessel? Were they obsessed by their own propaganda, that Lebanon is "a nest of terrorism"? Did they really believe that each civilian they were firing at deserved to be wounded, or killed?

Each time these ships fire their Oerlikon gun at civilians, they prove the lie about "purity

of arms" and raise the old, old Middle Eastern question of double standards. What if a Lebanese gunboat fired at Israeli civilians in Haifa? The UN Security Council would be called into session and the centre of Beirut flattened within 24 hours. There would be a question of war-crimes trials.

Oddly enough, I haven't met a Lebanese who believes the Israeli naval crews trying to kill them off the mouth of the Awali river are going to end up in a war-crimes trial. Not a soul thinks the US will utter a word of condemnation or complaint.

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Italy's Olive Tree sapped by hunt for allies

ANDREW GUMBEL
Rome

Three days after its historic victory, Italy's centre-left Olive Tree coalition is getting a taste of the obstacles ahead, as it struggles with its own internal contradictions, weighs up the choice of allies it needs for a majority in parliament, and fights off lingering fears of the man it beat, Silvio Berlusconi.

Although euphoria remains high and the authority of the prime minister-to-be, Romano Prodi, remains unquestioned, the various branches of the Olive Tree are already swaying to different rhythms.

The centrist wing, led by the outgoing Prime Minister, Lamberto Dini, has begun wooing the moderate faction of Mr Berlusconi's centre-right, to make up the numbers in parliament. It is already talking of the reconstitution of the old Christian Democrats as a buffer force between the ex-communist left and the ex-fascist right.

The main left-wing party, the PDS is busy flirting with the party Mr Dini found hardest to keep on his side during his 15 months in government, the far-left Rifondazione Comunista. "Rifondazione is our ally," said Giovanna Melandri, a PDS member. "We will have to see what we can and what we can't agree on together with it."

Rifondazione is tied to the Olive Tree by an electoral pact that served both of them well. But the two groups have little in common. Mr Prodi wants a big public sphere for mass communications, just as we did earlier this century with the education system," he said.

On Tuesday, Mr Prodi said he hoped to privatise the state telecommunications company, Stet, by the end of the year, as part of a programme to sell off state assets. Yesterday, Rifondazione's leader, Fausto Bertinotti, said he could never accept this. "We have to create a big public sphere for mass communications, just as we did earlier this century with the education system," he said.

Mr Bertinotti, a curious mixture of cloth-cap trade unionist and radical-chic fashion-victim, wants a wealth tax on unearned income and guarantees that state workers' salaries will be index-linked, although this was abolished in the early 1990s because it fuelled inflation.

Such proposals are out of the question if Mr Prodi wants to maintain his moderate image and retain the confidence of the international community. He has said the Olive Tree's programme will stay as it is and it is up to Rifondazione to decide whether it wants to play along.

That means, in practice, that the Olive Tree will have to look elsewhere for support on economic and budgetary issues, either to the volatile Northern League or to disenchanted members of Mr Berlusconi's centre-right.

The Olive Tree's fragility is also affecting the choice of ministers. A struggle is developing over the future role of Luciano Violante, a distinguished anti-Mafia magistrate who would normally be a natural for the justice ministry.

Mr Berlusconi, who has problems with the judiciary, has made it clear he would take the nomination of Mr Violante as a hostile gesture.

Chinese lay on the red carpet treatment for Yeltsin

TERESA POOLE
Peking

Not many visiting male statesmen, or indeed women, are bold enough to hug the Chinese president. But in the spirit of fraternal relations, Boris Yeltsin yesterday wrapped his arms around his equally portly host, lips straining in an apparent attempt to plant a big kiss on Jiang Zemin's right cheek.

Mr Jiang may not have been expecting such ardour, but the Chinese government had laid on the full works for the Russian president. From the moment Mr Yeltsin stepped off the aircraft the red carpet was waiting - in seemingly unending quantity.

At the official welcoming ceremony at the Great Hall of the People, Mr Yeltsin was flanked by a full military guard of honour, and broad grins were on everyone's faces. Mr Jiang said they were "old friends", before leading his guest to the first of two state banquets. On Tuesday, Mr Yeltsin had declared: "Today, there are no problems of a political nature between Russia and China."

The Russian president's three-day visit sets the seal on improved Sino-Russian relations over the past five years. The Russians have come in force; more than 350 were in Mr Yeltsin's party. Today, a political declaration will be signed by



Friendly welcome: The Russian President, Boris Yeltsin, receiving flowers from Chinese officials on his arrival at Peking airport yesterday. Photograph: Will Burgess/Reuters

the two presidents, and a range of agreements on economic co-operation between the former Cold War foes will cover topics from manned space flights, to nuclear power and fighting crime. Tomorrow, in Shanghai, Mr Yeltsin, Mr Jiang and the presidents of the former Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan will conclude a border confidence building agreement aimed at reducing military tensions.

Yesterday, security in Peking was noticeably tighter, with additional soldiers posted outside the embassy compounds, and large numbers of police along the roads destined for Mr Yeltsin's convoy. Tiananmen Square had also been cleared of people for the late afternoon welcoming ceremony.

Over the previous 24 hours, the Xinhua news agency had set the tone for the visit by churning out a stream of reports on the warmth of relations between China and Russia. Border troops now exchange holiday greetings, it said. And in the north-eastern province of Heilongjiang, students were clamouring to study Russian.

Sino-Russian trade will be a centre-point of discussions, with dozens of Russian businessmen due to fly to Shanghai for tomorrow's arrival of Mr Yeltsin. Peking views its northern neighbour as a supplier of raw materials and military hardware, while Russia's traders yearn to break into the vast market of China. There is considerable room for bilateral trade to improve. According to Chinese figures, two-way trade reached \$7bn (£4.6bn) in 1993, but last year had dropped to \$5.5bn (£3.6bn).

Yesterday, in Peking's "Russian market", a lively line of stalls along the west side of Ritan Park, independent traders from the former Soviet republics were loading huge sackloads of Chinese clothes on to tricycle rickshaws, on the first stage of

Peking puts HK visitors on the spot

STEPHEN VINES
Hong Kong

Anson Chan, the deputy to the Governor of Hong Kong, and four other officials have been forced into the embarrassing position of paying a visit to China tomorrow without knowing whether their status as senior leaders of the colony's administration will be recognised.

At first it appeared as though they would only be received as private individuals.

However, after a day in which the Hong Kong government had tried to play down the status of the visit, an announcement was made last night by China's official news agency which mentioned Mrs Chan's official title of Chief Secretary.

In a highly unusual move, the Hong Kong government issued this Chinese statement as a press release even though it was far from clear whether the delegation, whose other members were not mentioned, would be received as official representatives of the Hong Kong administration. Embarrassingly, the Hong Kong government had earlier accepted China's invitation on the assumption that its representatives were not going to be recognised as an official delegation.

China has allowed the ambiguity of their position to remain and will have noted its success in manipulating the Hong Kong government into a position where China has the last word on the status of the participants

sent from the colony. If the talks go well, from the Chinese point of view, they may be described as official.

However, they will only involve officials with whom China wishes to have dialogue and will definitely exclude the Governor, Chris Patten, who is frozen out of all discussions on the transfer of power.

The usually cool and composed Mrs Chan almost lost her temper yesterday when repeatedly asked by reporters about the capacity in which she would be visiting China.

She angrily said she was not prepared to compromise the talks she would be having with Lu Ping, China's most senior official dealing with Hong Kong affairs, by answering questions about "what capacity I go up" to China.

Doubts about the wisdom of making the trip delayed a decision until the last possible moment. However, after the green light was given yesterday the Hong Kong government launched a furious attempt at damage limitation.

Mr Patten sought to play down the issue by describing the controversy over the visit as "baffling" and said it was "ridiculous" for Mrs Chan to be seen as anything but "the leader of Hong Kong's service".

Nevertheless, no official was prepared to admit that China has succeeded in forcing the administration into talks on a basis in which the Hong Kong participants are short of any official standing.

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international

Aum trial circus acts grip Japanese

Gas attack 'mastermind' makes enigmatic court statement, writes Richard Lloyd Parry in Tokyo

The last time Shoko Asahara, the leader of the Aum Shinri Kyo religious cult, was seen in public was 11 months ago and then he was little more than a blurred shape, glimpsed through the windows of a police van. So when he appeared yesterday in chamber number 104 of the Tokyo District Court, no one knew what to expect.

How would he plead to the principal charge against him: that, along with a host of other murders and kidnappings, he ordered the sarin nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subway in March last year? Would he be contrite or defiant? Leaks from the justice ministry correctly predicted that he would not be allowed to wear his purple guru robes - instead he wore blue prison overalls. But no one had anticipated that the man held responsible for the deaths of at least two dozen Japanese and the poisoning of 5,500 others, would end up sounding like Princess Diana and Mother Teresa rolled into one.

Six-and-a-half hours into his

trial, after the names of each one of the 3,789 people killed or injured in the attack had been read out, Mr Asahara was invited to respond.

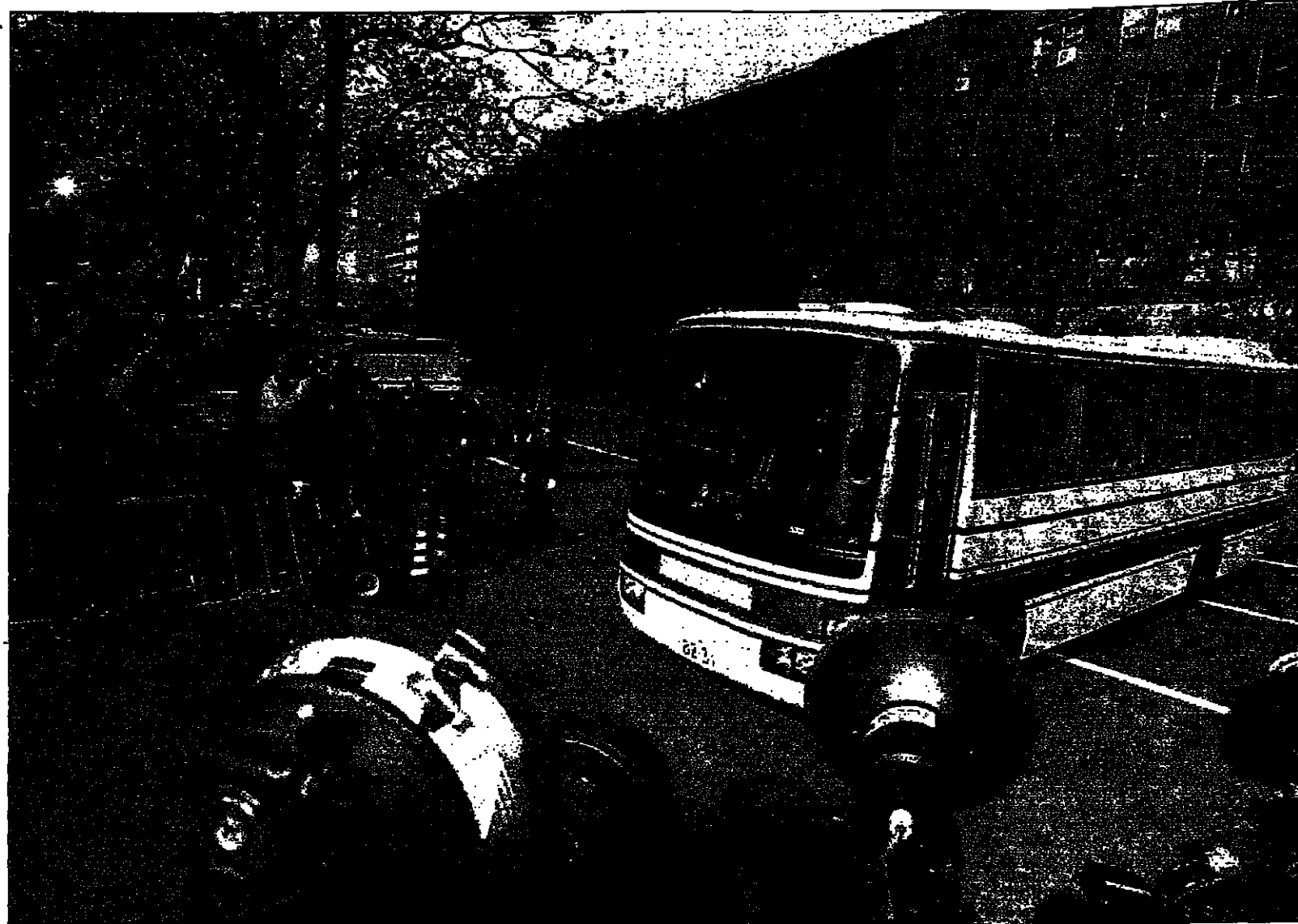
"I have always wanted to help those who have not attained absolute truth, freedom and happiness," he said. "and I still want to do so. Those who don't know truth, freedom and happiness are in agony, and I have striven to ease their pain with a sympathetic heart. I don't care about the inconvenience and pain being inflicted upon me, and I don't care about my life either. I have nothing more to say."

Japanese journalists, who are able to focus on little else these days, like to call it the "Trial of the Century". The trial began, as it is likely to go on, as a curious circus starting two irreconcilable acts. On one side sits the guru, a quack doctor turned religious leader. On the other is the Japanese justice system, closed and slow-moving.

The media are ringmasters.

The final outcome - conviction and, most likely, death by hanging for Mr Asahara - is in little doubt, but it will be a long haul. The wheels of the Japanese justice system grind slowly. Optimistic estimates expect the case to be done with in five years; if past precedent is anything to go by, Mr Asahara's execution may not be announced until the second decade of the next century. Chances of acquittal are minute: the conviction rate in Japan's district courts is 99.8 per cent.

But Mr Asahara's is no ordinary case. The sarin subway attack, which killed 12 com-



Driven to justice: Shoko Asahara arrives at court in Tokyo. He is charged with ordering the subway gas attack which killed 12 people. Photograph: AP

muters and poisoned thousands of others was not motivated by the usual terrorist goals. According to former followers of the guru it was intended as the first step to Armageddon, ending with a new world order presided over by Mr Asahara.

His words yesterday suggest his convictions remain intact. Japanese courts have no juries, and the final verdict will be delivered by a panel of four judges. But earlier courts have been lenient on Aum followers on the understanding that they

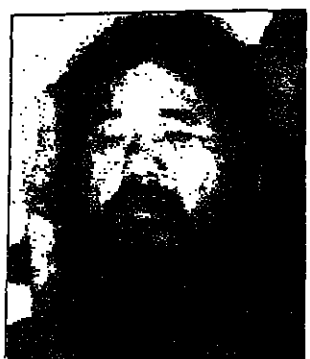
were acting on the guru's orders. He has been convicted before his trial has even begun.

The deluge of coverage intensified yesterday, with coverage of the trial dominating all the television news channels. A dozen television helicopters

buzzed over head as 12,000 people queued yesterday morning for a lottery allocating the 48 public seats in the court.

Among the people queuing was Hiroshi Teruya, a member of a comedy act called the National Academy Kalashnikov

Chorus. The troupe performs skits based on the Aum affair, and Mr Teruya explained: "It's black comedy," Mr Teruya admitted. "a bit like Monty Python." It was unclear whether he was referring to the song, or the trial.



Asahara: 'I don't care about the pain inflicted on me'

Tools of Dahmer's trade in murder may be sold

DAVID USBORNE
New York

Memento hunters with a twisted taste for the horrific will be celebrating a ruling by an American court yesterday that the tools used by serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer to torture and dismember his victims may be put up for auction.

Final approval for the unusual sale was granted by a judge in Portage, Wisconsin, over the objections of federal prosecutors and after several months of rancorous debate about the fate of Mr Dahmer's grisly belongings. The proceeds will go to the families of those he killed.

Dahmer was given several life sentences in 1992 after being convicted of a 13-year, sexually-driven spree of murder and cannibalism that took the lives

of 17 young men and boys. Dahmer was himself bludgeoned to death by a fellow prison inmate in November 1994.

Among the items to be auctioned will be a sledgehammer, saws, a hatchet, a hypodermic needle and knives, as well as drill bits used by Dahmer to bore holes into the foreheads of the drugged victims whom he had lured to his suburban Wisconsin home.

Also on the block will be the refrigerator and the vat in which body parts were found when Dahmer was first arrested in 1991. A lawyer who has represented the families of the victims, Thomas Jacobson, has estimated that the entire house-of-horrors haul might raise \$100,000.

News of the impending auction was in gruesome counter-

point to that other auction now captivating the imagination of the American public: the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis estate sale at Sotheby's in New York.

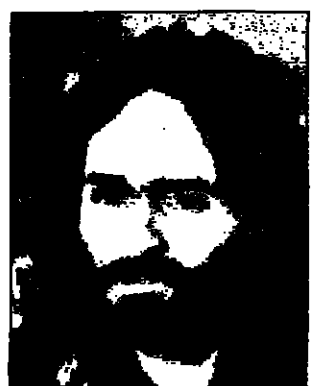
While the Dahmer sale will hardly attract the same clientele of Kennedy worshippers, there is little doubt that buyers there will be. Evidently, there is a vibrant market in the US for a secret ballot suggested that deputies from Mrs Ciller's new coalition partner, Motherland Party (ANAP), had abandoned her.

She has warned that the conservative coalition government could collapse if ANAP joined the opposition ranks against her. "The commission will work for two months," deputy speaker Kamer Genc told the 550-member assembly.

Mrs Ciller, who became



Notorious: Jeffrey Dahmer (above) and Charles Manson



Former Turkish leader in corruption inquiry

Ankara (Reuters) — The Turkish parliament yesterday passed an Islamist motion to set up a commission to investigate corruption charges against former prime minister Tansu Ciller.

MPs voted 232-179 for an inquiry into alleged links between Mrs Ciller and contract irregularities at the state-run electricity distribution company, TEDAS. Approval of the motion in a secret ballot suggested that deputies from Mrs Ciller's new coalition partner, Motherland Party (ANAP), had abandoned her.

She has warned that the conservative coalition government could collapse if ANAP joined the opposition ranks against her. "The commission will work for two months," deputy speaker Kamer Genc told the 550-member assembly.

Mrs Ciller, who became

Turkey's first-ever woman prime minister in 1993, stands accused of enriching herself, her husband and their associates through manipulation of contracts and privatisation.

"Mrs Ciller's biggest mistake was not preventing her husband from interfering with state contracts and appointments," Islamist MP Sevtet Kazan, the architect of the corruption motion, told the parliament.

The commission could recommend taking Mrs Ciller to the Supreme Court, which would effectively ruin her chances of becoming premier again under a power-sharing deal with the Prime Minister, Mesut Yilmaz.

Mrs Ciller stepped down in March after inconclusive general elections late last year in which the Islam-based Welfare

Party won by a narrow margin. She was not in parliament for the vote.

The refusal of Mr Yilmaz, leader of ANAP, to rally to Mrs Ciller's defence has renewed doubts about the minority coalition's longevity.

Mr Yilmaz, a political soul-mate of Ciller but a bitter personal rival, told his deputies to vote with their consciences.

Mrs Ciller called the vote "a political manoeuvre", but refused to comment on whether her coalition was in danger of crumbling, given the support by some of its members for the investigation.

"There's anger in my party. I will try to calm my friends down," said Mrs Ciller.

In a separate vote, parliament decided also to investigate former energy minister Sinasi Altiner for the same charges.

IN BRIEF

Doctors in France down stethoscopes

Paris — Almost three-quarters of France's doctors joined a one-day strike in protest at government reforms of the health and welfare system and cost-control measures they entail, writes Mary Dejevsky.

But their action was trumped by a government decision not only to toughen predicted spending controls on doctors, but also to reorganise the welfare management structures in such a way as to deprive France's major trade unions of much of their real power.

Gorbachev attacked

Moscow — A drunk, unemployed man slapped the former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev in the face during a campaign trip in Siberia. Bodyguards seized the man and handed him to police. AP

Mubarak assurance

Cairo — President Hosni Mubarak dismissed recent violence by Muslim militants in Egypt and said his government was winning the war against them. The Islamic Group massacred 18 Greek tourists in Cairo last Thursday. Reuter

Greenpeace snubbed

Sofia — Bulgarian officials rejected a Greenpeace appeal to shut a nuclear plant at Kozloduy and said that its reactors conformed to international safety standards. Reuter

Arms panel set up

Washington — House Speaker Newt Gingrich created a special investigative panel to examine what he called the "reckless" US role in Iranian arms shipments to Bosnia. AP

Aids on the march

Mangochi, Malawi — In some African armies half the soldiers are infected with the virus which causes Aids, a conference on the disease was told. "Prevalence rates in many armies of the developing world, especially in Africa, are exceptionally high," Malawi's Defence Minister, Justin Malewezi, told an Aids conference. Reuter

Dying general freed

The Hague — The UN criminal tribunal for former Yugoslavia ordered the immediate provisional release of a Bosnian Serb general, Djordje Djukic, who is dying of cancer. The three-judge panel said the charges should be maintained. Reuter

Chernobyl all-clear

Kiev — Authorities said no one was hurt and there was no more than a minor increase of radioactivity after fire raged through deserted villages around the Chernobyl nuclear plant, scene of the world's worst nuclear accident. AP

Fire rules broken

Dusseldorf — German authorities said the airport here did not conform to fire protection regulations when a blaze killed 16 people earlier this month. North-Rhine Westphalia state Premier Johannes Rau said flammable material had been used in false ceilings. Reuter

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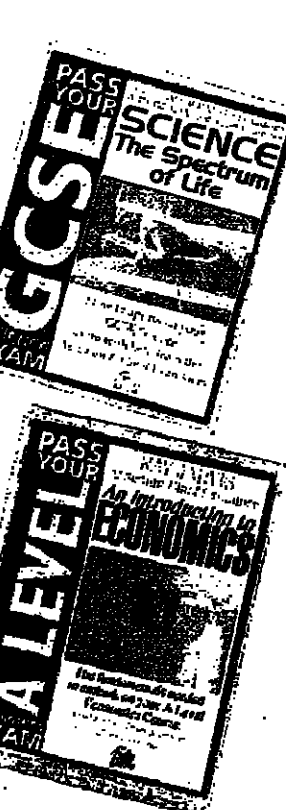
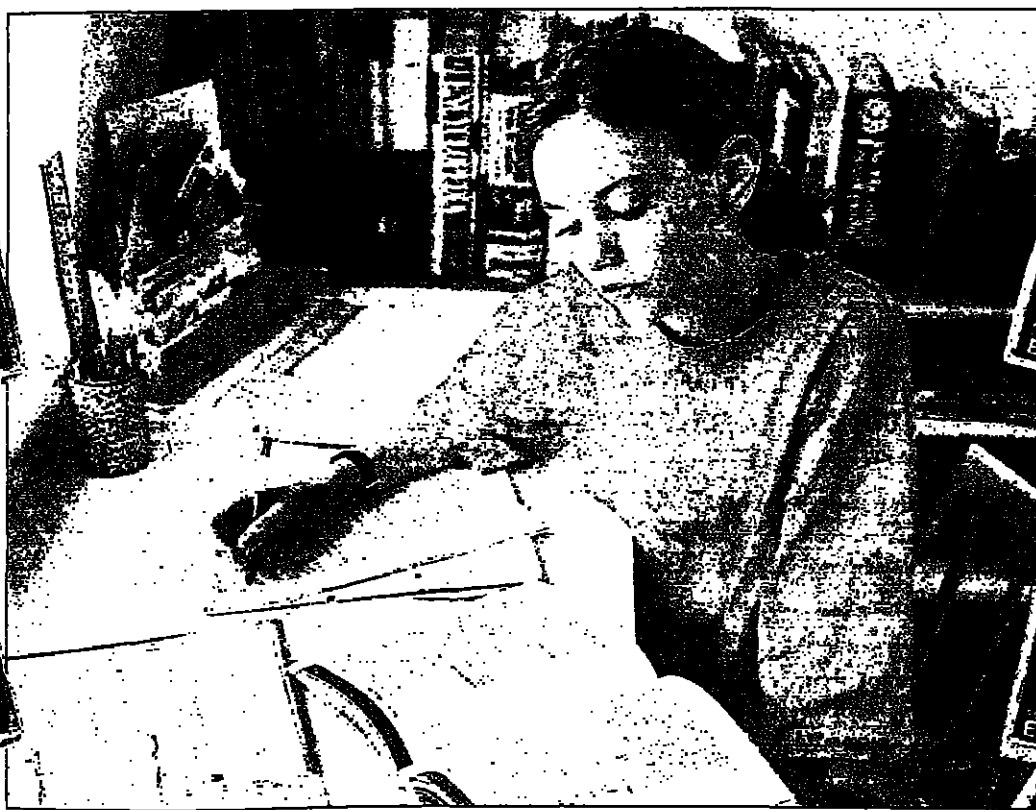
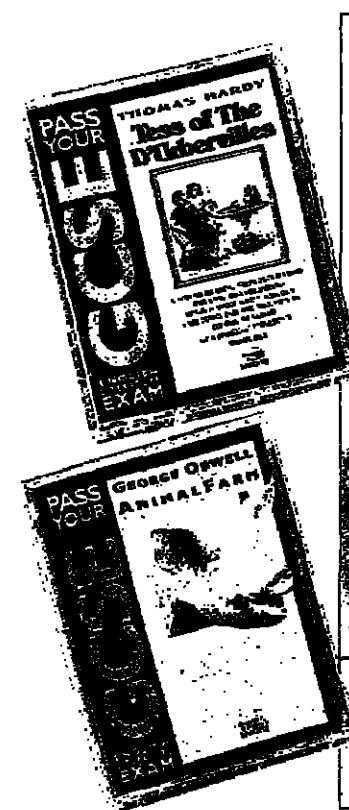
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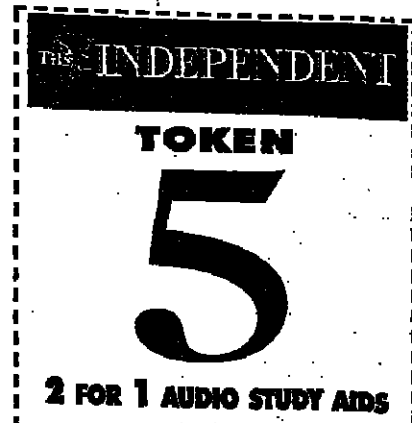
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Lit: Romeo and Juliet
Lit: Silas Marner
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Lit: Drama Texts
Eng: Preparing for the Exam
Eng: Writing
Hist: Int'l Relations in the C20th
Hist: Hitler & Mussolini
Sci: The Spectrum of Life
Sci: From Genes to Galaxies
Geog: Settlement, Rural & Urban
Geog: Examination Technique

A LEVEL TITLES

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Psychology: Ethics
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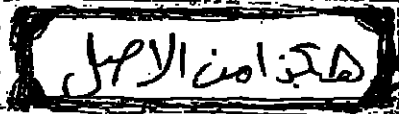
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Lit: Twelfth Night
Lit: Far from the Madding Crowd
Lit: Merchant of Venice





Second helpings: although Blair believes people should strive and be active, he also believes they should have a second, third and fourth chance in life. Photograph: Craig Easton

Left behind?

New Labour is accused of abandoning the underdog in favour of the middle classes. What does 'equality' mean to the party now, asks Yvette Cooper

Equality. Just whisper the word and watch the middle classes squirm. The successful and the privileged start counting their blessings and contemplating which they will have to sacrifice on the journey towards a brave new world. What was once a rallying cry for the outraged and the underdog to join the socialist cause sits uneasily with New Labour's pitch for middle England. Even the phrase "equality of opportunity" sounds, as one New Labour MP put it, "so tired".

Equality doesn't just alienate swing voters it confuses them. Equality of what? Of income? Of taxes paid? Of opportunity? Each has different implications. The result is that every reference to equality has to be qualified and explained to avoid misunderstandings. It's very cumbersome. So there are good political and pragmatic reasons why a hard-headed, left-of-centre party might avoid sloganeering about equality.

But that does not mean New Labour can escape having a view on the subject. Equality, justice, fairness, call it what you like, ideas such as these have lain at the heart of political movements for centuries. New Labour's views on equality are an essential part of its politics.

New Labour is a moving target, continually honing its views. But Tony Blair and his allies have spent two years outlining their moral values and their speeches and policy papers hold important clues about their views on equality.

Tony Blair has wrought two fundamental changes in Labour's approach to social justice. The first is that he has set out a moral vision quite different from that of Labour traditionalists. The second is in Labour's approach to capitalism: it has moved away from the traditionalists' view of the market as the root of deep-seated class inequalities.

What we regard as unfair crucially depends upon what we think people deserve. The most striking thing about Blair as a Labour leader is that for him this depends in large part on the individual. For Blair people are active, participating, choosing beings. Individuals fulfil themselves and lead moral lives

through endeavour. To be happy and fulfilled then, we need to be able to make choices, to learn, to develop and to work. But these striving, active people are not Thatcher's isolated individuals. They depend on - and thrive in - strong communities. We have obligations to the community around us - or, as Blair puts it, responsibilities as well as rights. When an individual gets something out of society, it is only right that she puts something back.

Membership of the community, for Blair, is the precondition of individual fulfilment, and he argues that no one should be excluded, we must all have a stake. Tough on those who take but do not give, to some Blair's emphasis on responsibilities has appeared harsh. Advocates for the underdog fear New Labour will blame the poor for failing to improve themselves.

However, by insisting that everyone is included in the community, Blair is arguing that people should always be helped to have a second, third and fourth chance in life. New Labour's flourishing individuals are very different from the people who populate old Labour's world: passive recipients of entitlements handed out by the state; workers weak in the face of the power of business. Yet it is different, too, from the Thatcherite portrait of people as atomised bundles of self-interest.

But it is not just Labour's high-flown values that have changed, its diagnosis of the causes of inequality has changed as well. Invectives against the evils of capitalism rarely slip through the lips of the modern Labour politician. Once they argued that class inequalities were the inevitable consequence of capitalism. New Labour takes a very different approach. In place of "working class", New Labour spokespeople refer to the unskilled.

New Labour no longer blames the market for creating unfairness. Quite the reverse. It says it believes that competition can be extremely fair. It blames vested interests for preventing the market working properly and institutionalising advantages for the few. So, for example, the glass ceilings that stop

women getting to the top of their professions are based on the prejudice of male bosses, who stop the market recognising women's true worth. In the global market economy, Labour recognises the pressures for growing wage inequalities. But it identifies the most important cause as the growing economic value of skills and their unequal distribution; it's not exploitation by the ruling class. So New Labour has changed its values and its diagnosis. What matters for most of us is what it will mean for taxes and benefits, education and jobs.

Three important consequences for equality flow from these changes in New Labour's approach. First, it is far more important to redistribute opportunities for people to learn and work, than it is to redistribute the cash in their

pockets. Hence Labour plans an expansion of job and training opportunities for the young and long-term unemployed. Before 1992, Labour's biggest commitment was to raise pensions and child benefit.

Labour traditionalists will be wincing. New Labour's distaste for redistribution through the tax and benefit system is, they say, testimony to the leadership's indifference to the plight of the poor.

Yet that charge is clearly unfair. The second consequence of Mr Blair's belief in "inclusion" is that the welfare of the worst-off must be raised. To guarantee each and every one of us a stake in his brave new world, his government would need to ameliorate the worst inequalities through tackling homelessness and poverty. With millions unemployed or

homeless and one in three children brought up in poverty, these are ambitious plans. It remains to be seen how much levelling-up Labour would actually be prepared to do in the name of social cohesion. New Labour is relatively comfortable with difference in jobs, income, lifestyles or achievements. Pavarotti and the millions he makes are fine by New Labour. People who work hard, or exploit their distinctive talents can happily reap their rewards in the market place, for they have earned them. Endeavour deserves reward. And differences in talents and abilities are to be celebrated.

Yet equality of opportunity on the other hand, appears to have become one of New Labour's central goals. This is the third consequence of the changes in

its values and analysis. To give people the chance to fulfil themselves they need equal opportunities to learn and to get jobs. New Labour is in the midst of becoming a more meritocratic party, which believes that jobs and pay should be allocated by fair competition, on moral and economic grounds.

Speaking last week in the John Smith memorial lecture, Gordon Brown provided a detailed account of Labour's view of equality of opportunity: "Equality of opportunity should not be a one-off, pass-fail, life-defining event but a continuing opportunity for everyone to have the chance to realise their potential to the full."

In a country where 80 per cent of the sons and daughters of unskilled workers leave school at 16, trying to achieve equality of opportunity is still a

radical project, which would require shifting resources towards the education of the least skilled and least advantaged; tackling bad schools rather than subsidising private schools; taxing university graduates to cover their fees and to use the money saved to improve vocational training instead.

Redistribution? Ouch. Could it be that New Labour would cut the perks and privileges of the successful to extend opportunities to others? It seems so. The party is prepared to cut child benefit for those 16- to 18-year-olds who stay on at school to finance new training and education opportunities for the teenagers who don't.

But how far are they prepared to go? New Labour has shown no interest in tackling the far bigger obstacles to equality of

opportunity in Britain: private schools and inheritance. It appears their main priority is radically to widen the opportunities available to the worst-off, while avoiding hurting those who have most. They want to level up not down. They believe, it seems, that increasing the opportunities for the underdog need not be at the expense of the successful. They want to build a coalition with the middle classes on the grounds that they can make the entire community better off.

But there is no guarantee that they are right. Sooner or later there will be a crunch, when a Blair government has to choose between paying for a sexy new scheme to improve opportunities for the unskilled, and retaining middle-class tax allowances which assist everyone else. We still can't be sure which way they will jump.

If you want to respond to our series on New Labour please fax your letters to: 0171-293 2056.



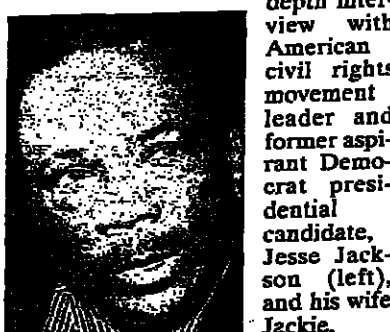
In Saturday's *Independent*: Tony Blair writes in response to our series



DIARY

Open and honest politicians? Nah...

How different, how very different, from the home lives of our own dear politicians, I am tempted to remark, on getting a sneak preview of an in-



depth interview with American civil rights movement leader and former aspirant Democratic presidential candidate, Jesse Jackson (left), and his wife Jackie.

which will appear in the *New Yorker* magazine next week. Musing proudly on his five children Jackson père declares: "What we got comin' along here is gonna be the Kennedy family of black America."

But it is the reminiscences of Jackson mère that intrigue me more. Jackie recalls that when they met at a black college in North Carolina, his first words to her were: "Hey girl, I'm gonna marry you." If that sounded unoriginally like a pop song, he later followed them up with the more radical line, says Jackie, "that he was gonna introduce me to sex." This he did, taking her to a black brothel (black people being barred from many motels in the early Sixties).

She gets her belated revenge in the *New Yorker* interview, saying: "I acted as if I had done this before. Until we finished. And I said: 'Why did we do that?' I got nothing from that. I think it's a waste of time." Jesse could only stare at me in astonishment.

Mrs Jackson remains forthright today. Of her husband's rumoured infidelities she says: "Of course I know what happens out there. I'm no dummy. I happen to like him more than I love him. Love is so temporary and emotional."

Love among the novelists

Not so in Britain. Yesterday was the annual Romantic Novel of the Year awards. The winner was Rosamund Pilcher, who earned £4m last year alone. Her book, *Coming Home*, offers examples of *fin de siècle* romantic fiction, with the chaps the darlings of moral virtue. Here is a typical moment:

"No, don't go..." And she added, as though he needed any encouragement, "it's a double bed. There's masses of space. I'll be all right if you stay. Please stop." Torn between desire and his own inbred good sense, Jeremy hesitated.



Down to earth: Captain Kirk (right) and the art of car maintenance

It doesn't happen that way in the movies. The problems of celebrities on the public highway continue. Yesterday I reported how Sir Cliff Richard was mobbed on a bus. Now I see that in America William Shatner, alias Captain Kirk of *Star Trek*, was stranded when his car broke down. He tells in an interview how he stopped a passing female motorist, Brian effort to gain her confidence he pulled celebrity status and declared: "I'm Captain Kirk." "Oh yeah?" she laughed, and sticking her middle finger out of the car window, she added as she drove away: "Well beam this up!"

Westminster in denial

Eventually, 'Is that a good idea?' he asked.

All Britain, you might think, acknowledges the possibility of a Labour government in the not-too-distant future. Not so, however, on Westminster City Council.

The good taxpayers of the London borough will be interested to learn that £48,000 of their money goes, each year, to the Advocacy Group, a political lobbyist outfit. Its job is exclusively to make contact with the big guns of parliament.

Those taxpayers will also be interested to learn, next, the outcome of a recent review of the lobbyists' performance. And what contact, I asked, had they made with senior Labour Party figures? Er, came the answer, well, none.

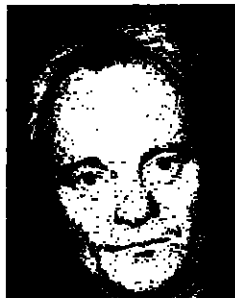
Censored porridge

What exactly could have been on the TV to prompt Michael Howard into depriving long-term prisoners of their battery-operated televisions? Looking up the schedules for Tuesday, when he trumpeted his announcement, I see on all channels "A Party Political Broadcast By The Labour Party".

Rockers revenge

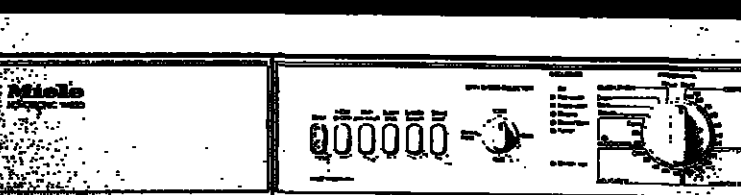
How many rock concerts have there been in Hyde Park? At the internationally broadcast press launch to announce this summer's concert with The Who, Bob Dylan and Eric Clapton, a civil servant from the Department of National Heritage ("the expert") said this would be the fourth, following The Rolling Stones, Blind Faith and Queen.

The expert is wrong. Eagle Eye himself once saw a long-forgotten group called Grand Funk Railroad played off the stage by the support act, Humble Pie, fronted by the late Steve Marriott (above). Others remember Pink Floyd playing there in 1968. Readers of a certain vintage may be able to help Virginia Bottomley's department get its facts right. Better still, her civil servants could concentrate on other things.



Eagle Eye

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The case for two Tory parties

The case for an open split in the Conservative Party grows stronger by the day. If the party divided into two parties, one openly anti-European and the other pro, it could be good for the country, and in the long run, good for the party as well. Neither side would have to waste their time papering over the cracks. Both could present a coherent platform which they might be able to carry through without fear of constant internal dispute.

Such a split is unlikely, of course, far fetched. The bonds of loyalty and history, friendship and fêtes that hold the party together at its grassroots are too strong to be weakened by a merely ideological dispute. Yet the possibility of a split and the case for one can no longer be ignored.

The obvious but far from accurate parallel is the role played by the breakaway Social Democratic Party in provoking Labour to embark upon its still incomplete modernisation. There is intense dispute about how influential the SDP was in Labour's evolution. Yet one thing is clear. The SDP was hugely productive: many of the new ideas it spawned have been taken up by new Labour. A Eurosceptic rump party split off from the Tories would pour poison over European integration, but deliver no new ideas that would help a Tory revival.

No, the case for a split is not based on the ideological ferment it would create. It is much simpler than that: as it stands the Tory party is increasingly unable to govern effectively. It is this time - government - that links the modern Tory party with the Labour Party in the late 1970s. The main issue facing the Labour Party then was whether it ran the country or whether power was really in the hands of the unions. Now the issue that tortures the Tories is also about who governs. "Is Britain run from Whitehall or from Brussels?" ask the Eurosceptics. Instead of Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon

emerging from Transport House to lay down their demands, we have Sir James Goldsmith conspiring with John Redwood at the Dorchester Hotel in Park Lane.

Labour's inability to give a credible answer to the question in the late Seventies sank it for more than a decade; the same fate awaits the Conservatives. Of course, Mr Major would not agree. Yesterday in his speech to the Institute of Directors he made yet another attempt to square the circle. His pitch was to offer a new way to be a Eurosceptic. Mr Major rejects Euroscepticism of tone. He wants to sound Europhilic in general, stressing that there is no chance of Britain withdrawing from Europe.

But he hopes there is a way of combining this Europhilic tone with a Euroscepticism about the details of policy. On this he may well be right: the case for reform of the Common Fisheries Policy is huge; the case for joining a single currency finely balanced. All legislation emerging from Brussels should be gone through with a fine toothcomb. Yet where Mr Major is wrong is to believe it is also possible to be a Eurosceptic about EU institutions. It is impossible to reconcile a pro-European tone with opting out of vital decision-making committees on social policy, for instance.

Eventually the circle always refuses to be squared. That is what the Eurosceptics, in their simplistic world, understand and that is why they will continue to undermine the Tory party's ability to govern.

Of course all this may pass. Sir James's Referendum Party may well be peaking too soon. But at the moment it is difficult to see how the Conservative Party will get beyond this ideological impasse on Europe and so reassert its credentials as a party capable of stability in government. That is why an open split must be a distant and drastic but serious possibility.

Flogging the establishment

He that spareth the rod hateth his son, the Book of Proverbs tells us in chapter 13, verse 24. John Patten, the former education secretary, might well agree. He was flogged with a ferula - a 2ft long whalebone strap - by the Jesuits at Wimbledon College. Corporal punishment, said Mr Patten some 30 years later, "under certain circumstances can be really useful". We are perhaps intended to infer that it clearly did him no harm.

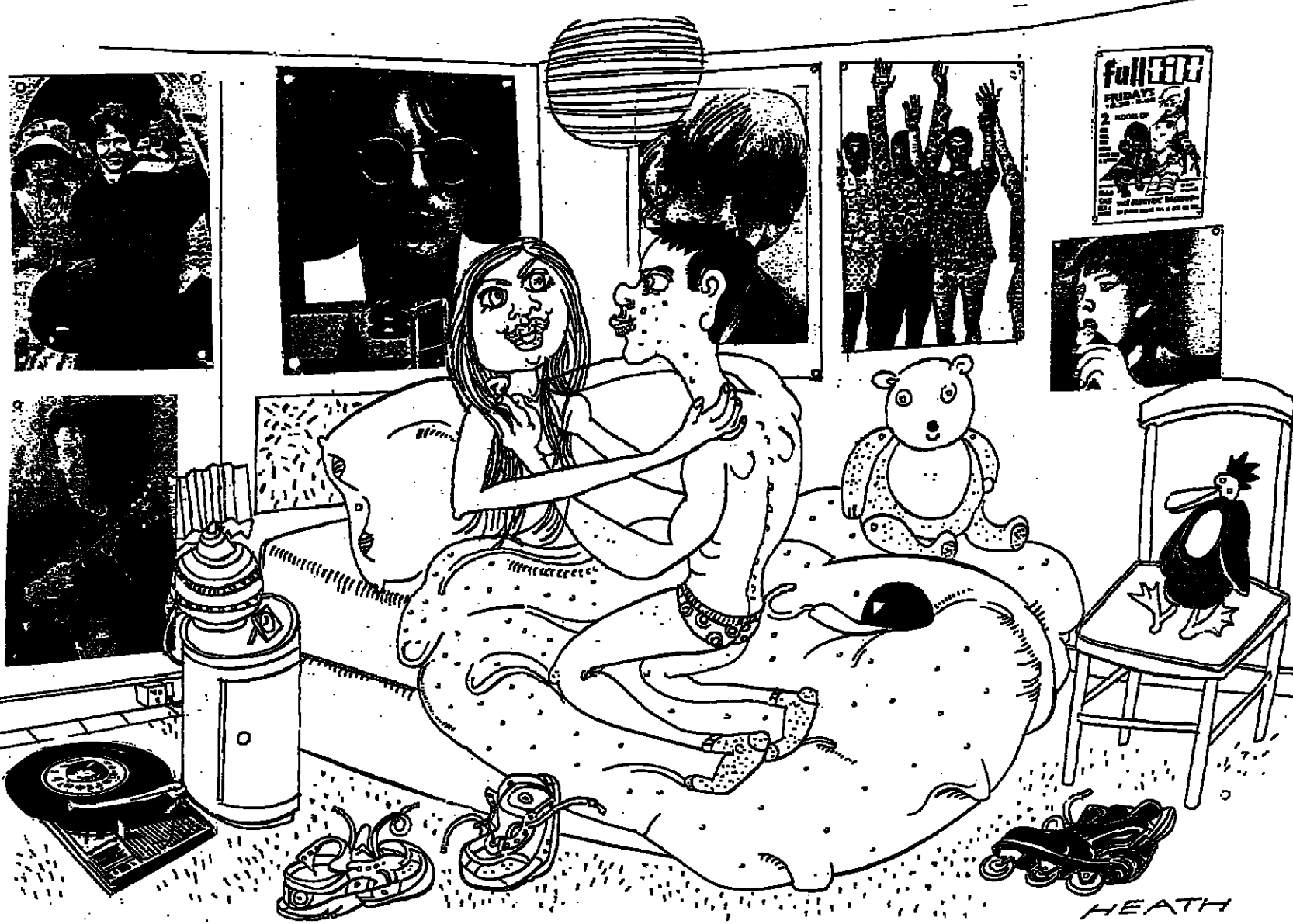
Why then, with this endorsement at both cabinet and biblical level, has Douglas Hurd gone on to the defensive over a reference to his exploits while at Eton? Sebastian Faulks, in his new book *The Fatal Englishman* writes of Jeremy Wolfenden being beaten by the Captain of School. "A grave boy called Douglas Hurd", reviewing the book, the former foreign secretary criticises the chapter on Wolfenden and its "inaccurate account of a beating I am supposed to have given him at Eton". The inaccuracy, however, seems to be solely in the date given for the event. Indeed, Douglas Hurd's reputation as a flogger crops up surprisingly often in reminiscences of old Etonians. Does his disavowal indicate a schism with the flogging tendency of the party, or is Mr Hurd simply trying not to thrash against the tide of history?

Caning pupils in state schools has been illegal since 1982, following a ruling of the European Court. Most private

schools have followed that trend - only a handful still employ corporal punishment - although the European Court in 1993 upheld the right of a British private boarding school to cane a seven-year-old boy.

The barbaric practice of caning is mercifully on its way out, yet it has clearly left its scars, paradoxically more markedly on the floggers than the floggees. As exemplified by the memories of the proud-to-be-beaten Patten and the "inaccurate account" Hurd, it is those who administer barbarity who wish to forget, to hide it under the carpet rather shamefully. Those who suffered under it have little alternative but to believe it was good for them. When a recent biography of Anthony Chevenix-Trench accused the late Eton headmaster of being sadistically fond of caning, howls of protest were heard from boys he had thrashed, united in defending his reputation.

Yet what of our other cabinet ministers and captains of industry and the civil service who were educated at public school? What bonds have been tied through thrashings? Who thrashed whom, how often, and when? Surely this is something to be included in the register of members' interests. The British establishment is riven by many factions, but it may be that the divide between the floggers and the floggees is one of the least articulated but most important.



My parents sent me to my room because I wanted to go and see "Kids"

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

School system fails with disturbed pupils

Sir: There is nothing new about the existence of children who are too difficult for teachers to cope with in ordinary classes ("Teachers lambasted for strike over boy", 23 April). Three years ago I retired from teaching in a school for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. I was there for 21 years and still help on a voluntary basis.

In the last few years I have seen a change from an all-round therapeutic school catering for varying problems of about 60 pupils, most of whom returned to normal schooling at the age of 11 and many before, to a sin bin holding a handful of very disturbed children whose real needs cannot be met in a school and who are not provided with the psychiatric help that in the past was available in boarding establishments.

The children we would have had in the past are still there, but are now in normal schools causing disruption to others, failing to make progress and preparing to make even more disruption when they enter secondary education. Obviously this problem is partly financial, but it also seems to be the result of a policy, at government level, to integrate special-needs children regardless of the nature of the need. It goes without saying that parents are no longer happy for their child to join our school, and that few young men will wish to come back saying, "Miss, you changed my life!"

GIVEN REEBIE
Twickenham, Middlesex

able conditions. The rest of the children and their parents have the right to learn in controlled and unthreatening conditions. Wilding's parents hold sole responsibility for their son's behaviour. Gillian Shephard is ducking hers. The teachers are absolutely right.

BRIAN FRENCH
Altrincham, Cheshire

Sir: Am I, the only newspaper reader who has been appalled at the release to the press of the name of a troubled child who has been excluded from school? If this was done by teachers, their union or the school, their ethical standards leave a lot to be desired.

JEAN ROBINSON
Oxford

Fran Abrams writes: The boy's name was released to *Capital* Television by his mother.

Oxford and the 'tainted cash' row

Sir: In your editorial on the Flick benefaction to the University of Oxford ("The Flick fiasco", 18 April) you attempt to discredit the university on the grounds of hand-wringing and inconsistency.

The facts are that when concern was expressed about the benefaction the matter was, at once, fully investigated, and the university told the view that the money was not tainted and that it was entirely proper to retain it. The university has not in any way retreated from that view, as Dr Gert-Rudolf Flick himself acknowledged publicly. The title was removed from the chair, and the funding was returned to the donor, only at the personal request of Dr Flick himself, following a deplorable campaign of vilification. The university remains very grateful to Dr Flick for his initial support.

Dr PETER NORTH
Vice-Chancellor
University of Oxford

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. (Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Cheerful view from Merseyside

Sir: I am not a native-born Merseysider. Nevertheless I was appalled to read Peter Popham (23 April) describe recent shootings, riots that took place more than 10 years ago, a stadium disaster in Belgium and the awful murder of a toddler as somehow linked and illustrative of Liverpool's alleged "urban barbarity". Presumably he regards the Brixton riots (all of them), the killing of PC Blakelock, unprovoked attacks on tube passengers and the murder of a headmaster as accurately summarising the character of London.

Clearly, his visit to Merseyside was fleeting. Otherwise he would have known that the very obvious new investment here is not (yet) the result of Objective One money but flows from the sustained efforts of government, local authorities and private enterprise alike to build on Merseyside's recent successes. The region still has much to achieve but views formed from a distance do nothing to support the efforts of local people to realise their ambitions for Merseyside.

ROGER PRIDEAUX
Birkenhead

Why Israel relies on military might

Sir: Alessandro Ansa writes (23 April): "Israel was created by sheer military might and has continued to exist through this power." In 1948 there was the sheer military might of the Egyptian, Jordanian, Syrian and Iraqi armies assisted by the sheer military might of the British, who had a part in arming them. When the newly created

state of Israel was invaded by this sheer military might it responded through the Haganah with sheer conviction, determination and courage. Thereafter Israel understood that her survival would depend upon developing her own sheer military might.

MICHAEL ZEFFERTY
Fareham, Hampshire

Prince's good works unsung

Sir: Your leading article on 22 April "A manifesto for the monarchy" suggests that the Prince of Wales should follow the example of the Princess Royal's "impressive, determined charity work". Surely he is doing this already, through the Prince's Trust and a host of other concerns to which he gives his unstinting support. Last year Prince Charles carried out over 600 engagements, many of them relating to charitable causes. The Prince's good work both at home and abroad receives very little publicity, while every opportunity is taken to show him in a bad light.

DONALD FOREMAN
Secretary
The Constitutional Monarchy Association
London E4

Leap-year bug

Sir: The suggested solution to the Millennium Bug, deducting 50 from the year (letter, 20 April), will put the computer user out of step with the sequence of leap years. Alignment can be restored by deducting 28 or 56 instead. Another illustration of the problems that can be caused by oversimplified fixes.

JEFF BARNES
Harrow, Middlesex

Paying for yet more roads

Sir: Recent debate in the *Independent* about the Private Finance Initiative has convinced me that it's time for another cup of Andrew Marr's coffee and a little more concentration ("A public finance scandal in the making", 11 April; letters, 20 April).

Using the PFI to build socially useful projects such as schools, colleges and hospitals is one thing, and the merits or otherwise of this approach have been thoroughly debated; using it to build more roads, which even the Department of Transport itself now admits will simply encourage more traffic, is quite another and the issues this raises have yet to be aired. With the exception of the Channel tunnel rail link, road-building projects form the largest single segment of the PFI. At £1.1bn, the value of road schemes already announced amounts to over twice as much as the total for hospitals.

And the method chosen for building these roads, whereby a scheme from the national programme is offered to the private sector on a design, build, finance and operate (DBFO) basis in return for payment by the Treasury of a "shadow toll" for every vehicle that uses the road, will simply mean more and more cars, noise and pollution at a time when the consensus is increasingly for traffic reduction.

It's not hard to see why DBFO is so attractive to a government short of cash yet eager to cut taxes in the run-up to a general election. It's a "buy now, pay later" way of reinvigorating a roads programme that had virtually ground to a halt. In the long term, though, it will be a huge waste of public money. A forthcoming report to be published by Transport 2000 shows that the so-called Salisbury bypass in Wiltshire will cost the taxpayer twice as much under the PFI than as a public road. And that is without attempting to put a price on the water meadow setting of Salisbury Cathedral, as painted by Constable and Turner, now due to be severed by a private route on an embankment the height of a telegraph pole.

EMMA MUST
Roads Coordinator
Transport 2000
London NW1

Sir: Bypasses are conventionally justified on two basic grounds: the relief given to the bypassed

community, and the improved journey times for the bypassing traveller. In the examples quoted by W.K. Stead (Letters, 23 April), it is clear that there were significant benefits in Devon and Cornwall. However, the roads were primarily justified by the Government in terms of the benefit to the bypassing traveller (using the much-criticised CoBA system).

However, the situation is somewhat different in Newbury, as in any instance where the bypassed community is of significant size. The majority of Newbury's traffic is local, and will remain on the existing roads even if the bypass is built. The community will not be relieved of its traffic problems. For the Government, relieving the problems of Newbury was only ever a side issue compared with the time savings to commuters on the A34.

The other thing that is different is that it is now 1996. It would be a brave politician who claimed that all road building is a good thing. All would say that it is a matter of balance, with journey-time savings rated as less important than they once were, when compared with habitat destruction, traffic generation, pollution, global warming and the toll of road accidents.

An expensive mistake is being made at Newbury. I pray that this time it will be the last.

RICHARD MANN
Oxford

Sir: I was very interested to read the article (23 April) about the mallard's nest found on the route of the Newbury bypass. However, I was also concerned at the impression given that the protesters have left the area and that the fight to stop this hugely damaging road has now ended.

Whilst the people camped in the trees on the bypass route have been evicted, more camps have sprung up around the route of the proposed road. Hundreds of campaigners are still in Newbury and many more are expected to join the campaign when the construction work begins. There is still time for this monstrous scheme to be scrapped and to invest the money in alternative measures that will actually solve Newbury's traffic problems.

SIMON DOWDEN
The Third Battle of Newbury
Newbury, Berkshire

Starved research

Sir: David Harrison ("Paying for the new pioneers", 17 April) draws attention to the research funding crisis faced by UK universities. However, his suggested solution (even greater selectivity) depends on a number of implausible assumptions:

- 1) that departmental (and in effect, institutional) "research ratings" have sufficient validity to justify funding decisions;
- 2) that the (rated) past performance of academics is a valid guide for prediction;
- 3) that data of poor validity relating to the performance of other academics who happened in the past to have been in their departments or institutions, provide a valid basis for predicting the future discoveries of other academics.

The nation will not be well served by funding bodies that behave like this. The problem is the underfunding of the system as a whole. This is the problem that must be addressed in the coming general election.

P K BURGESS
Department of Psychology
Dundee University

Voter fatigue

Sir: Andrew Marr's support for a more serious and unpredictable political conversation ("Politicians: if you want us to listen, keep it Short", 18 April) is welcome but, alas, forlorn. Having never failed to vote in a local or general election for 45 years, I have decided never to vote again. I now belong to Marr's "Real Britain", turned off not just by the predictability of political communication, but also by its increasing deceitfulness.

R P WILLIAMS
Trunch, Norfolk

Haiku cycle

Sir: In this environmentally conscious age, the haiku form (Letters, 18, 23 April) could be used as a paper-saver. Government reports could be distilled thus:

A package of lies
on the table, is unwrapped
to be recycled

PATRICIA V DAWSON
London SE26

Phew. It's another true blue scorcher

Story so far, Britain has just suffered its driest winter ever, following its warmest summer ever, and there are fears of intense drought conditions waiting for us ahead in the summer of 1996. But who or what is to blame for this? Mr Weatherman thinks he has the answers...



MILES KINGTON

So, Mr Weatherman, who or what is to blame for this?

Mr Weatherman writes: I don't think you can say that anyone is to BLAME for bad weather. It is a very modern idea that someone is always to blame. Of course, it is always fun to find a scapegoat and we all need a meaningless sacrifice from time to time, and no one can deny it would be nice to see Michael Howard get his comeuppance, but to say that anyone is to BLAME for bad weather - well, it's like asking who is to blame for gravity or for the fact that two and two make four.

Mr Weatherman writes: Pardon? God is to blame for gravity... and for two and two makes four, etc...

Mr Weatherman writes: So you think that God should resign, do you? Yes, in fact, I think he probably has. That probably explains why everything is going wrong. God is no

longer in charge. Exasperated by centuries of criticism, he has resigned in a huff and at the moment we have a caretaker coalition government of archangels, saints and martyrs, all without experience, who are making a hash of the world.

Mr Weatherman writes: Hmm. It's a beguiling theory, but it's a little outside the scope of a simple weather forecaster - I mean, we don't ever like to see God as a cause of weather. Not in the short term, anyway. I mean, we don't get up on our TV screens and say, "There were several unexpected heavy thunderstorms in the Lancaster district this afternoon which disrupted power supplies; there was no obvious meteorological explanation for this, so God will have to take the responsibility. I'm afraid."

Why not? Mr Weatherman writes: Hardly scientific, is it?

I thought you said meteorology wasn't a proper science?

Mr Weatherman writes: Did I? Yes, I rather think I did. Well, the fact is that meteorology is something even worse than a science. It's a pseudo-science. We like to SOUND like a science. We like to sound as if we DO know what is going on, and why. That's why we use so much talk of isotars and degrees and wind-chill factors and things...

Just because it sounds scientific? Mr Weatherman writes: Yes. That's why we hate it when you ask who is to blame for bad weather. We don't want to use terms like blame, or bad weather. What is BAD weather? No weather is bad in its own right, only bad for someone. Rain is bad for the cricketer, good for the farmer...

Oh, come on - who IS to blame for the recent dry summer?

Mr Weatherman writes: Well, the Tories, actually.

The Tories? Mr Weatherman writes: Indirectly, yes. Look at it this way. All nature depends on a series of cycles. Yin and yang. Birth and death. Night and day. Hot and cold. Winter and summer. Sow and reap. Wax and wane...

What's this got to do with the Tories? They don't wax and wane. They just sell off public property to the public.

Mr Weatherman writes: Ah, but you're wrong. The Tories have always been part of a natural cycle of government and opposition. Once upon a time they alternated with the Liberals. Now they alternate with Labour. But they haven't been alternating with Labour! They've been hanging on to office grimly since 1979!

Mr Weatherman writes: You're right. And that's the trouble! For 16 years or more the Tory party has refused to alternate with Labour in the great tradition of British politics. We now think this is beginning to affect everything. The absence of the old Tory Labour cycle is having its effect on the weather cycle, which is also going seriously awry.

You seriously maintain that the longer the Tories stay in office, the more dislocated the weather picture will be?

Mr Weatherman writes: It's just a hypothesis. But it can be easily tested. How?

Mr Weatherman writes: By the Tories resigning. And how can that be engineered? Mr Weatherman writes: I'm glad you asked me that. The easiest way to get the Tories to resign is...

I'm sorry - that's all we have space for today. Some other time perhaps.

obituaries / gazette

P. L. Travers

P. L. Travers (the initials stand for Pamela Lyndon) is best known as an author of children's books, in particular as the creator of Mary Poppins, one of the most original and universally loved characters in modern children's fiction: a "cosmic nanny" / "guardian angel" who arrives one day out of the blue, as if sent from Heaven, in Cherry Tree Lane to look after the Banks children, Jane and Michael.

The first of P. L. Travers' five Mary Poppins books, entitled simply *Mary Poppins*, was published in 1934 and became an immediate success with children and adults alike. It was translated into 20 languages and became a world-wide bestseller when Walt Disney made it into a film starring Julie Andrews. Four more stories followed at intervals: *Mary Poppins Comes Back* (1935), *Mary Poppins Opens the Door* (1943), *Mary Poppins in the Park* (1952), *Mary Poppins in Cherry Tree Lane* (1962) and *Mary Poppins and the House Next Door* (1989). In the intervening years she published *The Fox in the Manger*, based on a Christmas carol in which the fox brings his gift of cunning to infant Jesus, thus uniting cleverness and goodness, wisdom and tameness in cosmic harmony; and *Friend Monkey*, the story of the Linnet family with their pet monkey and their nanny Miss Brown-Potter. But these characters failed to achieve the same archetypal status as her first creations.

"I have never written for children," she once remarked, "for who knows where childhood ends and adulthood begins?" And indeed the timeless, magical world she creates in her work is a reflection of her own mystical poetic vision. This she expanded more theoretically in a series of lectures and essays, of which *What the Bee Knows: reflections on myth, symbol and story* was a selection published in 1989.

P. L. Travers was reserved to the point of secretiveness: the

use of initials was partly due to her desire for anonymity. "At first I wanted to publish my books anonymously - the best poems in anthologies are written by Anon," she said. By the same token she did not like biographies: "What porridge Mr Keats had for breakfast is of no consequence," she wrote. As a result for years I did not know that the tall, elegant old lady I saw walking down our street with a queenly gait was the creator of Mary Poppins. Later I interviewed her for a book and we remained friendly neighbours from then on.

Although warm and open, in interviews she declined answering any questions relating to her private life, or her age. Her official date of birth was 1906; in fact she was born in 1897 in Queensland, Australia, to an Irish father and a mother of Scottish origin. She was educated at home by governesses, and as a young girl she worked in turns as secretary, dancer, actress and journalist. She wrote poetry in childhood. "Hardly Mr Yeats," commented her father when she showed him her first poem at the age of seven, but her mother was encouraging: "I like the rhyming of mother with smother," she said. She started publishing her poems in various local papers while still a teenager.

When her father died, the family fell on hard times, and she had to abandon her ambition of university education to earn a living. She left Australia for London in her early twenties, where she worked as a freelance journalist. She sent some of her poems to AE (George Russell) who published two of them in the *Irish Statesman*, of which he was then the editor. Later she met him on a trip to Ireland and became his protégée. He introduced her to George Moore in London, and to Yeats and other members of their literary circle in Dublin. Their close friendship lasted until AE's death. Through him she met A.R. Orage, the editor of



Julie Andrews in the title role of *Mary Poppins* (1964). The film, based on P. L. Travers's best-selling 1934 novel, won the actress an Oscar

the *New English Weekly*, who published some of her poems and articles.

It was during convalescence after a severe illness that she conceived *Mary Poppins*. "She came to me to amuse me," she said, "staying long enough for me to write her down." She believed that her books were gifts of God, "given" to her, and quoted C.S. Lewis saying, "There is only one Creator, we merely mix the ingredients He gives us."

"*Gloria in Excelsis Deo*," she wrote on the last page of *Mary Poppins Comes Back*, for, although not religious in the conventional way, P. L. Travers was profoundly mystical. In her youth she had become interested in Zen Buddhism: "The Mary Poppins books were in essence Zen stories," she claimed. Later she explored other mystical traditions, and in the last years of her life she became interested in Islamic mys-

ticism (Sufism), particularly the Persian branch of it, through meetings with members of the Fraternity and their publications in Britain.

P. L. Travers lectured extensively at American universities - Radcliffe, Smith College, Clermont - and received an honorary degree from Chatham College, Pittsburgh, in 1978. She never married, "but I have a family," she would say to deflect further probing - an adopted son and grandchildren whom she loved. Her last years were marked by severe old age, though her mind remained clear until the end, and she remembered names, titles of books and poems accurately. Last time I visited her she told me that Cameron Mackintosh wished to make *Mary Poppins* into a musical, but that their were problems about rights with Walt Disney's corporation. "It could make a good musical," she said, her eyes "so blue that they go back to God" sparkling with enthusiasm.

At the end of *Mary Poppins Opens the Door*, when Mary leaves the children and disappears, P. L. Travers wrote: "The bright shape speeding through the air above them would forever keep its secret. But in the summer days to come and the long nights of winter, they would remember... Mary Poppins herself had flown away, but the gifts she had brought would remain for always." It will be the same with P. L. Travers herself.

Shusha Guppy

Mary Poppins is one of that handful of films, including *The Wizard of Oz* and Disney's animation classics, that have become perennial favourites, writes Tom Vailance. It deserves its popularity, for it is both a morality tale and family entertainment of a high order.

Set in a never-never land of a stylised Edwardian England, where it seems perfectly feasible that an eccentric neighbour should erect a ship's deck on his roof, it conveys its message with a "spoonful of sugar" that never cloy. This is due largely to the performance of Julie Andrews, both matter-of-fact and immensely endearing as the nanny who comes down from the sky with her umbrella and carpet-bag, to take charge of the neglected children who have set out their requirements in a letter torn up by their father but wafted to Mary in the clouds. (The film created its own fairy tale when Andrews, having been famously passed over by Hollywood for the role she originated on stage in *My Fair Lady* won an Academy Award for this, her first screen role.)

Even Dick Van Dyke's excruciating Cockney accent, heavily criticised the English side of the Atlantic, has taken on its own quaint charm, become the butt of countless comedians' jokes, and is part of the film's folklore. (He recently described the film as "the most delightful experience of my life".) Unlike *The Wizard of Oz* or *Snow White*, *Mary Poppins* has no elements to frighten even the youngest child - the horde of black-garbed would-be nannies, wafted off by a magical breeze, are the closest thing to witches on view.

"A Spoonful of Sugar" has endured as the most popular of its accessible songs (all beautifully orchestrated by Irwin Kostal) through the lulling "Chim Chim Cheree" won the Oscar. A delightful animation sequence, cued by "Jolly Holiday", includes farmyard animals joining in song. Andrews and Van Dyke gliding across a brook on the backs of two turtles, a jaunty tap routine by Van Dyke and a row of penguin waiters, and as its climax a lively gallop on carousel

ponies. The former vaudevillean Ed Wynn is Mary's Uncle Albert who literally floats on air when he laughs and has to think sad thoughts to come down (a counter-variation on Peter Pan's advice to the Darling children to "think lovely thoughts" in order to take flight). The mid-air tea party at which Albert tells the children, corny jokes pays homage to another classic, *Alice in Wonderland*. A bracingly exuberant dance by chimney-sweeps over London rooftops highlights the choreography of Marc Breau and Dee Dee Wood, while the lullaby "Feed the Birds" movingly features the 85-year-old Jane Darwell (Ma Joad of *The Grapes of Wrath*) in her last screen role.

P. L. Travers reportedly felt the film added too much sugar to her original premise, but her "universal truths" are faithfully conveyed, particularly the self-awareness of the children's father, who finally relaxes and joins his children in kite-flying. The splendid supporting cast are primarily British - Glynnis Johns and David Tomlinson as the parents, Matthew Garber and Karen Dotrice as the children, plus four great character players in Hermione Baddeley, Elsa Lanchester, Arthur Treacher and Reginald Owen.

Though live action sequences were filmed in the summer of 1963, special effects and animation took another 11 months and the film opened in August 1964 to great acclaim to become Disney's biggest box-office success to that time. That success continues today with ongoing video sales and television transmissions all over the world.

Helen Lyndon Goff (Pamela Lyndon Travers), writer: born Maryborough, Queensland 9 August 1899; (one adopted son); died London 23 April 1996.

Dzhokhar Dudayev

Dzhokhar Dudayev, the rebel Chechen leader who was killed last Sunday in a Russian rocket attack, was a hero to his own people but a figure for whom Russia's political and military authorities reserved the deepest hatred and contempt. His drive to create an independent Chechnya caused President Boris Yeltsin to launch what the Russian leader later described as the worst mistake of his presidency: a war in the northern Caucasus that has so far killed more than 30,000 people and badly tarnished Yeltsin's image as the standard-bearer of post-Communist Russian democracy.

Dudayev, whose pin-striped suit, portulac hat and thin moustache gave him an appearance rather like that of a 1930s silent movie actor, was born in Chechnya in 1944, perhaps the most tragic year in his nation's history. It was then that Josef Stalin deported the entire Chechen people to Central Asia, falsely accusing them of collaboration with Nazi invaders. Tens of thousands of Chechens died en route and in a subsequent typhus epidemic, and it was not until 1957 that the Soviet state officially rehabilitated the Chechen nation.

As a young man, Dudayev's career flourished. After leaving Kazakhstan at the age of 13, he was educated at the Tatar Aviation School in southern Russia and later at the prestigious Gagarin Aviation Academy outside Moscow. A karate champion in his youth, he joined the Communist Party in 1968 and rose smoothly up the air force's ranks to become the first Soviet general of Chechen origin. After Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985 and started the reforms that ultimately led to the Soviet Union's collapse, Dudayev was the commander of a division of nuclear bomber aircraft at the Tartu air base in Estonia.

It was at this time that Dudayev first revealed the strength of his political views. Under Kremlin orders to help suppress Estonia's bid for independence, he refused a command to blockade the television and parliament buildings and was even brave enough to fly the Estonian flag at his base. For this he won lasting popularity with the Estonian people, but was transferred with his unit to Grozny, then the capital of a united Chechen-Ingush republic.

Dudayev retired from the air force, entering politics as an anti-Communist nationalist and leader of the Pan-National Congress of Chechen Peoples. This organisation swept to power in Chechnya after the abortive hardline Communist coup of August 1991, capitalising on the failure of the local leadership of the Chechen-Ingush republic to support Yeltsin and the democratic forces in Moscow.

Ironically, whereas Dudayev was on Yeltsin's side in August 1991, by 1995 he was the Russian president's mortal enemy. In contrast, Doku Zavgayev, the local Chechen leader who failed to support Yeltsin in 1991, was reinstated by the Russians last year as the head of a pro-Moscow satellite government.

Dudayev's popularity was so great in 1991 that he won a decisive victory in presidential elections in Chechnya, which now considered itself not only separate from Ingushetia but independent from Russia. Yeltsin's response was to declare martial law in Chechnya, but he was forced into a humiliating climbdown after the parliament in Moscow refused to support him. Nevertheless, for the next three years Yeltsin subjected Chechnya to an economic blockade, branded Dudayev

the criminal leader of a mafia clique and launched two unsuccessful coup attempts in Grozny.

Finally, in December 1994, came the full-scale onslaught the Chechens had long feared. The Russian army, however, distinguished itself more by its blunders and brutality than by efficiency, and Dudayev - whose secessionist ambitions had not attracted the support of any Western governments - was suddenly transformed in many people's imaginations abroad from a comical and corrupt Ruritanian boogymon into a romantic and defiant crusader for the rights of small nations.

Yeltsin insisted he would never negotiate with Dudayev and only last February, when announcing his decision to run for re-election as president, declared that he would have the Chechen leader shot. With typical insouciance, Dudayev retorted earlier this month: "It's all the same who is president in Russia. President Yeltsin no longer controls the real power structures - namely, the army." By refusing to capitulate in the face of Russia's might, Dudayev (who liked to compare himself to a lone wolf, a Chechen national emblem) won comparison with the Imam Shamil, the 19th-century Caucasian hero who fought the Russians for 25 years. Yet Dudayev was also criticised in the West for countenancing hostage-taking and terrorism by several of the armed units loosely grouped under his leadership.

He was bitter that President



Dudayev: a lone wolf

Bill Clinton. John Major and others refused to endorse his dream of an independent Chechen state, and by last February his statements, issued from a variety of secret hideouts, were becoming increasingly bizarre. Thus he accused the United States of funding the Russian military campaign in Chechnya, and even made the fantastic allegation that the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) had started the war.

Dudayev's detestation of what he portrayed as aggressive Russian imperialism in the Caucasus did not extend to a loathing of Russia's culture or people. He married a Russian, Alievna, with whom he had two sons and a daughter. One son, Avtar, was reported to have been killed in Grozny in January 1995.

Dudayev's death deprives the Chechen nation of a leader of genuinely inspirational qualities, but one who was at times erratic and reckless. He and Boris Yeltsin both bear responsibility for the failure to negotiate a deal securing broad-ranging autonomy for Chechnya. As it is, Dudayev's homeland will bear the scars of the latest example of Russian repression in the Caucasus for decades to come.

Tony Barber

Dzhokhar Dudayev, air force officer and politician: born 1944; married (two sons, one daughter); died 21 April 1996.



Travers: "What porridge Mr Keats had for breakfast is of no consequence"

Eva Jones

Eva Jones wrote her first novel, about a highly provocative 13-year-old, when she was sixty-something. Published in 1976, *Thirteen* was dazzlingly well reviewed, translated into several languages, and gave her the confidence to embark on several more novels, the most notable of which is a story of sibling incest, *Taboo* (1981). Her previous career had been chequered, to say the least; at times she had even had to read palms to make a living.

Eva (nee Solon) had met her husband, Rudolf Jones, in 1929 while dancing the tango. They were both aged 16, attending their first dancing lessons in Berlin. One day she heard the

Nazi goose-step past her school and made a rapid getaway to Paris. She had no money and no work permit, but with her beautiful soprano voice soon found work singing in an anti-Nazi cabaret in the Rue de Seine, run by Isadora Duncan's brother.

Meeting up again with Jones, who was studying at the Ecole des Sciences Politiques, she married him in 1935 and started training to become an opera singer, but soon after the outbreak of the Second World War she was sent with other German Jewish refugees to the Camp de Gurs in the Pyrenees. When the Germans approached the camp she slipped

out through the barbed wire ("I was able to because I had so little to eat") and went to Toulouse where she somehow survived by telling fortunes and selling newspapers, and was once more reunited with Jones. The authorities decided to send them to an enforced residence at the foot of the Pyrenees.

Warned in 1942 by the BBC World Service that the Jews would be deported to Poland, they secretly left the residence and hid in Marseilles and Toulouse. The arrival of German troops in the "free zone" compelled them to run once more, and they found a path over the Pyrenees into Fascist

Spain. On their arrival, after a 36-hour walk, they were incarcerated twice, first with thieves and murderers, which she described as "an adventure", then with political prisoners, an experience "which nearly finished me". The British consulate helped them to escape and Eva was taken to Gibraltar and her husband to Lisbon. Once again they were reunited, this time in Britain.

Settling in Hampstead with her husband (whose name was altered to Jones while serving in the Forces), Eva taught German for many years and wrote poetry which she recited in pubs. Then Olwyn Hughes advised her to write a novel. "But

I am too old," said Eva. "I'm in my sixties now." Olwyn snapped: "You are not old at all. You are just 13." Inspired by this remark, Eva promptly went off and wrote her gorgeous first book, *Thirteen*. To introduce it she selected a quote by Margot von Sydow: "The soul does not age."

No words could have been more appropriate for Eva, whose soul flashed impatiently out of her eyes and who scorned resignation. She went on writing books, including *Malou* (1982), the story of a gifted singer who refuses to recognise her talents. She suffered a severe stroke in 1988, which meant that three of her novels



Jones: "The soul does not age" are still waiting for a posthumous publisher.

Jill Neville

Eva Solon (Eva Jones), novelist: born Berlin 27 July 1913; married 1935 Rudolf Jones (one daughter); died London 17 April 1996.

Erma Bombeck, writer, died San Francisco 22 April, aged 69. Journalist whose humorous column was syndicated to around 600 newspapers twice weekly since 1965. Books include *The Grass is Always Greener Over the Septic Tank* and *If Life is a Bowl*

of *Cherries, What Am I Doing in the Pit?* Hiteswar Saikia, politician, died New Delhi 22 April, aged 61. Chief Minister of Assam since 1991, he was credited with bringing political stability to the divided state.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Prince Royal, Prince, British Royal and British Royal, attended the Board of Management Meeting and visits British Royal, Scotland, was the guest of honour.

London Society of Chartered Accountants

Miss Evelyn Bowyer, Chairman of the London Society of Chartered Accountants, presided at the Founding Societies Centenary Award Presentation Dinner held yesterday evening at the Merchant Taylors' Hall, London EC2. The Right Rev James Thompson, Bishop of Bath and Wells, presented the 1996 Award to Baron Wakeham. Mr Keith Woodley, President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, also spoke. Among those present were Sir Brian Jenkins, the 1993 Laureate, and the Presidents of the other Founding Societies, Mrs Barbara Appleton (Liverpool), Mr Richard Dyson (Manchester) and Mr Tony Cooper (Sheffield).

Wills.

Sir Alan Herries Wilson, of Barnet, Hertfordshire, the physicist and mathematician, and chairman of Glaxo Group 1963-73, left estate valued at £1,059,766 net.

RAF College Cranwell

Marshall of the RAF Sir Keith Williamson unveiled a plaque yesterday in Trenchard Hall at the RAF College Cranwell, Lincolnshire. The plaque, presented by the Royal Air Force Cranwell Apprentices' Association, commemorates aircraft apprentice training at Cranwell between 1922 and 1962. Air Marshal Sir Eric Dunn and Air Commodore A.J.B. Clements also attended.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

DEATHS

MUNBY Mary, widow of Dennis Munby, died peacefully at home on Sunday 21 April 1996. She is greatly missed by James, Frances, Katherine, Julian, Teresa, Charmian, and her 10 grandchildren. Her funeral will be at Blackfriars, St Giles, Oxford, at 1.30pm on Monday 28 April, followed by burial at Wolvercote Cemetery. Any enquiries to Reeves & Paine, 286 Abingdon Road, Oxford, telephone 01865 242529.

NOWELL-SMITH, Susan, on 28 March, at St. Luke's Nursing Home, Oxford, aged 87. Memorial service at New College Chapel, Oxford, Saturday 11 May at 3pm.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephone 0171-293 2011 or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at 26.50 a line (VAT extra).

Birthdays

Mr Eric Bristow, darts player, 39; Sir Robin Caler, former chairman, Distillers Company, 77; Mr Anthony Christopher, former trade union leader, 71; Mr Johann Cruyff, football manager, 49; Mr David de Peyer, director-general, Cancer Research Campaign, 62; Dr Thomas Faber, chairman, Geoffrey Faber, 69; Miss Ella Fitzgerald, singer, 78; Lord Gladwyn, author and former diplomat, 96; Sir Francis Graham-Smith, former Astronomer Royal, 73; Lord Hayter, a Deputy Chairman, House of Lords, 85; Mr Alan Hoole, Governor of Anguilla, 54; Sir Paul Judge, director-general of the Conservative Party, 47; The Earl of Lisel, 77; Mr Michael Field, photographer, 67; Mrs Evelyn Smith, Ambassador to Greece, 57; Mr Ian McCartney MP, 45; Mr David Machin, Under Treasurer, Gray's Inn, 62; Lady Marre, former chairman, BBC and IBA Central Appeals Advisory Committee, 76; Surgeon Vice-Admiral Sir Godfrey Milton-Thompson, 66; Mr Buster Mottram, tennis player, 41; Miss Marian Norrie, circuit judge, 56; Mr John Owen, Governor of the Cayman Islands, 57; Mr Al Pacino, actor, 56; Miss Helen Peling, circuit

judge, 63; Mr William Roache, actor, 64; Mr David Shepherd, artist, 65; Lord Skidelsky, former Professor of International Studies, Warwick University, 57; Mrs Veronica Sutherland, ambassador to the Republic of Ireland, 57; Mr Bjorn Ulvaeus, singer, 51.

Anniversaries

Births (St) Louis IX, King of France, 1214; King Edward II, 1284; Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector of England, 1599; James Ferguson, astronomer, 1710; Emerich de Vattel, diplomat and jurist, 1714; Sir Mark Isambard Brunel, engineer and inventor, 1769; John Keble, Anglican priest and founder-member of the Oxford Movement, 1792; Friedrich Preller, landscape painter, 1804; Gustave-Rodolphe-Clarence Boulanger, painter, 1824; Pauline Lucca, soprano, 1841; Charles Burgess Fry, cricketer and writer, 1872; Walter de la Mare, poet and novelist, 1873; Guglielmo Marconi, radio pioneer, 1874; Wolfgang Pauli, physicist, 1900; Edward (Egbert) Roscoe Murray, broadcaster and journalist, 1902; Ross Lockridge, novelist, 1914; Deetha Leon Battista degli Alberti, architect, sculptor,

writer and musician, 1472; Margaret of Anjou, Queen, wife of Henry VI, 1482; Torquato Tasso, poet, 1558; David Teniers the Younger, painter, 1690; John Woodward, geologist and physician, 1728; Anders Celsius, inventor of the centigrade thermometer, 1744; William Cowper, poet, 1800; Thomas Duncan, painter, 1845; William Beaumont, physiologist, 1853; Daniel MacIver, painter, 1870; Johann Karl Friedrich Zöllner, astrophysicist, 1882; Louis-Gabriel-Eugene Isabe, painter and lithographer, 1886; Kawanabe Kyosai, painter, 1889; Vladimir Ivanovich Nemirovich-Danchenko, playwright and director, 1943; Gertrude Miller (Countess of Dudley), actress, 1952; Constance Collier (Laura Constance Hardie), actress, 1955; Sir Carol Reed, film director, 1976; Dame Celia Johnson, actress, 1982; Ginger Rogers (Virginia Katherine McMath), actress and dancer, 1995. On this day: the Dutch defeated the Spanish in the Bay of Gibraltar, 1607; a Convention Parliament met and voted for the restoration of Charles II, 1660; the guillotine was first erected in Paris, 1792; construction of the Suez Canal began, 1859; the Confederate forces surrendered to Admiral Farragut at the Battle of

New Orleans, 1862; the musical show *The Goshawk* was first produced, London, 1896; the United States declared war on Spain, 1898; British, French, Australian and New Zealand forces landed at the Gallipoli peninsula, Turkey, 1915; Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg became president of Germany, 1925; Puccini's opera *Turandot* was first performed, in Milan, 1926; the San Francisco Conference of Allied nations opened, 1945; in North America, the St Lawrence Seaway, 89 miles long, was opened, 1959; the BBC radio serial *The Dales* ended after 21 years and over 5,400 episodes, 1969; in Portugal, a military junta deposed the government, president and prime minister, 1974; in Stockholm, the West German embassy was blown up by terrorists and two people shot, 1975; Portugal held its first free elections for 50 years, 1975. Today is Anzac Day and the Feast Day of St Anianus of Alexandria. St Heribald and St Mark the Evangelist.

Lectures

National Gallery: Dillian Gordon, "Lost and Found (III): the missing Predella Panel reunited: Pescellino, *The Trinity with Saints*", 1pm.

Victoria and Albert Museum: Sarah Bowles, "The Social History of Furniture (III)", 2.30pm. Tate Gallery: Clement Page, "Abstract Utopianism and the Modernist Aesthetic", 1pm. National Portrait Gallery: Christine Riding, "The Dramatic Moment: portraits as history paintings", 1.10pm.

Lunches

PPP healthcare group. Sir Peter Gadsden, chairman, PPP healthcare group, presided at a luncheon held yesterday at Plasterers' Hall, London EC2, following the group's Annual General Meeting. The Lord Mayor of London, Mr John Chafetz, and the Sheriff, Sir Peter Levene, were present. The Lord Mayor, Sir Peter Gadsden and Mr Peter Owen, group chief executive, were the speakers.

Dinners

Parliamentary Group for Energy Studies. The Earl of Lauderdale hosted a dinner for the Parliamentary Group for Energy Studies yesterday evening in

the House of Lords, London SW1. Mr George Ispohak MP, Minister for Industry and Local Government, Scotland, was the guest of honour.

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Lang steps in to halt power takeovers



Shockwaves: Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade

PETER RODGERS
Business Editor

Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, is expected to encourage the establishment of Eastern Group as a major vertically integrated electricity company, despite his decision yesterday to prevent National Power and PowerGen following the same route.

He stopped the takeovers of Midlands Electricity by PowerGen and Southern Electric by National Power, overturning a four to one majority recommendation of the Monopolies Commission and the favourable views of his own specialist officials at the DTI.

But his decision agreed with the recommendations of Patricia Hodgson, the dissenting member of the MMC, Professor Stephen Littlechild, the electricity regulator, and John

Bridgman, the director general of fair trading.

Southern Company of the US, the utility that has been planning a bid for National Power, was yesterday considering its response, but appears unlikely to make any early move and may retreat altogether from the fray.

Mr Lang's decision appears to put a huge obstacle in the way of its plan to bid for National Power unless it disposes of control of its own UK power supply and distribution subsidiary, Swch.

As electricity shares fell sharply in reaction to the surprise decision, the City and the power industry were left with far more questions than answers, because Mr Lang made clear he was still judging vertical integration case by case and that it will be acceptable for some deals but not for others.

The question marks were underlined when Professor Littlechild, the electricity regulator, hinted strongly that he was happy with the proposed sale of 6,000 megawatts of existing power generating plant to Eastern, the electricity supplier and distributor that is now a Hanson subsidiary.

The sale - 4,000 megawatts of which is by National Power and 2,000 by PowerGen - will make Eastern into a big vertically integrated generating and distribution company just as Mr Lang has stopped the vendors moving in the same direction.

Eastern will eventually have a generating market share of up to 14 per cent, only a few percentage points lower than projections for National Power.

Professor Littlechild said that he had no objection in principle to vertical integration - particularly where it can help to

promote competition, but in the case of the National Power and PowerGen bids he believed it was "prudent to prohibit these mergers until competition is more firmly established in the electricity industry".

He added that he welcomed the two companies' agreement to sell the 6,000 megawatts of plant to Eastern and he was "ready to take forward the necessary regulatory arrangements". In the absence of objections by Professor Littlechild there appears little reason for Mr Lang to stop the Eastern purchases.

Professor Littlechild said later: "A distinction must be made between vertical integration of the two largest generators and expansion of output by a regional electricity company that has a very small share at the moment."

Mr Lang said he blocked the

National Power and PowerGen takeovers because they would be "detrimental to competition given the current state of the electricity market's development".

He remained of the view that vertical integration was not inherently objectionable, but the remedies proposed by the MMC majority would "not be sufficient to address" the detriments the reports identified.

The majority of members of the Monopolies Commission had said that both deals were against the public interest because they would reduce competition among independent power plants, and cause prices to be higher than otherwise.

The majority also cited adverse regulatory effects, but dismissed one of the main complaints about the takeovers, which was that they would dam-

age competition in the electricity pool, by inhibiting the "contracts for differences" market, where regional companies acquire options on future supplies.

However, having found against the takeovers, the majority said the effects were not sufficiently serious to justify prohibition, and they recommended the bids should be allowed to proceed if the two companies gave a number of undertakings to the Government, including the sale of their stakes in independent power plants.

Mrs Hodgson, in a dissenting note, said the mergers were "likely to limit severely an increase in competition that is necessary and might otherwise be expected to take place; and the detriment could not be sufficiently mitigated by the remedies proposed."

Comment, page 21

Lloyd's new delay on rescue bodes well for Names

JOHN EISENHAMMER
Financial Editor

The ruling Council of Lloyd's of London is expected today to accept another delay in the timetable of its rescue plan in the expectation of offering improved financial terms to hard-hit Names.

The final statements on the individual amount that Names will have to pay Lloyd's to draw a line under their affairs at the insurance market are now expected to be sent out in late June, several weeks later than planned.

Lloyd's is increasingly confident that broad-based support is growing for the rescue plan among the majority of the 34,000 Names, and that a further delay to finalise better conditions will clinch the deal.

Lloyd's is seeking to cut losses from its disastrous loss-making past by transferring its pre-1993 policies into a special re-insurance vehicle, Equitas. Most of the capitalisation for Equitas will come from Lloyd's reserves, but the balance will be made up by final contributions from Names. These Equitas premiums have until now been calculated as totalling £1.9bn, shared between Names according to their liabilities. Now, in negotiations with the Department of Trade and Industry, Lloyd's is hoping to reduce the amount to below £1.5bn.

In addition to this expected reduction in the premiums, Lloyd's is privately confident of raising at least another £300m from market professionals, auditors and possibly a bank loan, to top up its pot of £2.8bn to be used for offsetting the cost to Names of Equitas. Combining the two would mean an improvement of more than £500m in the settlement terms, and a significant improvement in the deal offered to Names with the heaviest losses, who tend to be among those at the forefront of litigation against the society.

Under the earlier settlement calculations, Lloyd's offered to cap the Equitas premium of the several thousand hardest-hit Names at £100,000. An increase of the settlement offer terms by around £500m would enable Lloyd's to halve that cap to £50,000, a key litigating Names' demand, and channel more funds to the worst-off.

The new timetable to be discussed by the Council is also to consider the postponement of the society's annual meeting of 15 June, when Names will vote on the rescue plan.

Telegraph stake to cost Black £273m

TOM STEVENSON
City Editor

Conrad Black drew a line under his turbulent four year relationship with the City yesterday, offering to buy back the 36 per cent of The Telegraph not already owned by Hollinger, his privately owned investment vehicle. The £273m cost of buying the minority puts a value of £763m on the newspaper publisher.

Shares in the company, which publishes the daily and Sunday Telegraph newspapers, surged 90p to close at 559p, just short of the offer. Including a 10p special dividend, the bid is worth 570p a share, close to the 620p high reached in May 1994, and at least 100p more than a similar, failed bid tabled by Mr Black a year ago.

That was rejected by independent directors who, led by Lord Swaythling, yesterday recommended acceptance of the latest offer. The directors were advised by NM Rothschild, the merchant bank that a year ago

said Mr Black's offer undervalued their own 500p valuation of the company.

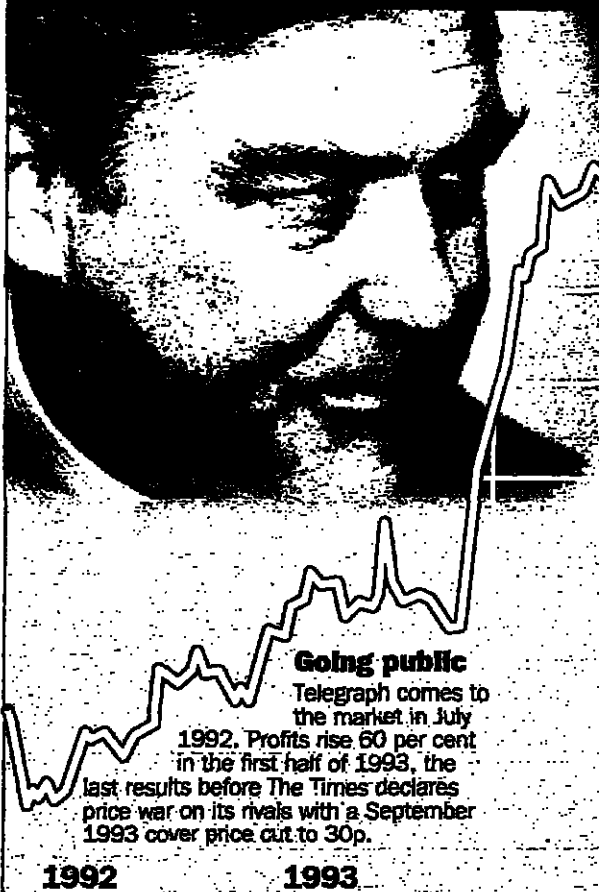
The latest offer could be increased if The Telegraph's 25 per cent interest in John Fairfax Holdings, publisher of the Sydney Morning Herald and Melbourne Age, is sold in the next two years for more than AS\$3 a share.

Daniel Colson, deputy chairman and chief executive of The Telegraph, as well as a director of Hollinger, said the daily paper would be seeking a rise in its cover price when conditions were "appropriate".

"We will see how it goes," he said, "but at the appropriate time the cover price will go up. If it was not for the nonsensical price war with the Times we would be at least at the 48p level seen prior to the price war two years ago."

The Telegraph is currently priced at 40p compared to 30p for the Times. The Telegraph's short life as a publicly quoted company has been characterised by acrimonious controversy, which

The Telegraph's final edition in the City



reached a peak with the resignation in June 1994 of the company's stockbroker Cazenove. The blue-blooded broker resigned its position in protest at

the sale by Mr Black of shares worth £79m only weeks before the Telegraph joined in the newspaper cover price war started in September 1993 by

Counting controversy
Hollinger sells shares worth £79m in May 1994 only weeks before the Telegraph joins in the price war. Telegraph shares fall 40 per cent. The company apologises to its employee shareholders. A Stock Exchange enquiry exonerates Black, but Cazenove resigns in protest as company broker. The Times cuts again to 20p.

Back to basics
The appointment of new editors for both the Daily and Sunday titles signals a shift to the right. A further price rise to 40p in November improves prospects, although too late to save 1995 figures, down again. Yesterday offers 570p for minority shares.

Cold war with the City
October 1994: Black offers to buy back half the shares he sold in the summer. Buy most of Borty family stake in December at 450p. In February hints at bid for minority but withdraws offer in May after Rothschild's recommendations rejection. Price rise to 35p in June signals end of price war.

James Ross to be Littlewoods' chairman

NIGEL COPE

Littlewoods, the privately owned retail and football pools empire which was the subject of two take-over bids last year, seems set for a radical shake-up after the company named James Ross, the former Cable & Wireless chief executive, as its new chairman yesterday.

Mr Ross, 57, left Cable & Wireless with £1.3m compensation last November after a disagreement with then-chairman Lord Young, who was also ousted by the board.

Littlewoods denied the high-profile appointment meant that Littlewoods was being groomed for a stock-market flotation. "That is not on the agenda at the moment," a spokeswoman said. "Mr Ross has been put forward as chairman to help develop a coherent strategy for the group and to enhance the performance of the business."

The Moores family which controls Littlewoods is set to formally approve the appointment at the company's annual meeting on 23 May.

Mr Ross's position will be non-executive but he will spend four days a week with the company for the first 18 months to two years while he reviews the group's complicated management structure and under-



New broom: James Ross, put forward to develop a 'coherent strategy' for Littlewoods

performed businesses. Littlewoods declined to disclose Mr Ross's salary but it is likely to compare favourably with the £400,000 he received at Cable & Wireless. He will replace Leonard van Geest, who

was paid £225,000 in 1994. Mr van Geest, who was keen to retain his position, will receive compensation of up to £450,000.

Further changes on the Littlewoods board are expected and these could include the de-

parture of managing director Bill Huntley and finance director Jim Michie. The Moores family has only one member on the board, James Swenson-Taylor, though this too could be the subject of review. Littlewoods is attempting to

separate the management of the business from its ownership where the faction-ridden Moores have often failed to agree.

The shake-up is the result of a study of the company's management structure by accountants Coopers & Lybrand. A second report on the ownership structure is yet to be acted upon. Options include selling parts of the company, a partial flotation or continuing with the existing structure.

Littlewoods has been struggling in recent years and earlier this month reported a sharp decline in profits from £116m to £97m which were affected by a £2m charge for restructuring.

Last year the group, whose pools business has been badly hit by the National Lottery, was the subject of two £1bn-plus takeover bids, one from its former chief executive Barry Dale, the other from a consortium which included N Brown the mail order company and Iceland stores. The Moores family rejected the offers.

There is speculation that the UK's mail-order business is ripe for rationalisation and that Littlewoods may choose to strengthen its catalogue business with an acquisition. Freemans, Sears's struggling mail-order business, may be a possibility.

6,000 jobs face axe in Airbus restructuring

MIKE HARRISON
Toulouse

Thousands of jobs could be shed by British Aerospace and its three partners in Airbus Industrie under plans for a radical overhaul of the European aircraft manufacturer.

Proposals for restructuring the consortium with the eventual aim of turning it into a conventional public company will be presented to the Airbus board in late June.

The four partners employ about 30,000 in Britain, France, Germany and Spain. Jean Pierson, Airbus managing director, said yesterday that the restructuring could enable it to make large cost savings of up to 20 per cent, making Airbus more competitive with its American rival Boeing.

This could entail up to 6,000 job losses across the board, including more than 1,000 in Britain, but Airbus executives would not be drawn on the numbers.

Mr Pierson said the biggest scope for cost-savings was in the ranks of white collar staff where there was vast duplication of activities such as purchasing. British Aerospace employs around 7,000 directly on Airbus work at two main sites in Bristol and Chester, but the total number of jobs in Britain dependent on Airbus work is put at 25,000. A 20 per cent cost reduction could result in up to 1,500 job losses in the UK.

A further 8,000 workers are employed by Aerospaciale in France. The two other partners are Deutsche Aerospace and Casa of Spain. Airbus employs 2,000 people in Toulouse.

The report on the restructuring of the consortium, drawn up by Airbus chairman Edzard Reuter will set out several options. These will range from retaining Airbus as a group of economic interests (GEI) to a much more fundamental overhaul whereby the four partners become equity shareholders in a conventionally structured company.

Another option is to create an intermediate structure short of full plc status. Mr Pierson ruled out a flotation of Airbus in the foreseeable future.

Under the present structure the workload of Airbus is parcelled out according to the shareholdings of each partner. BAe, which has a 20 per cent stake, makes the wings. But this has been criticised as an unwieldy and inefficient system that increases costs massively.

Converting Airbus into a plc would allow it to award work on the basis of competitive tendering. Crucial issues still to be resolved include what assets each partner would put in, how they would be valued and what overall authority Airbus would have.

Germany has already warned that it will not help fund the next Airbus project, the \$8bn (£5.3bn) development of a 500-plus seater super-jumbo, unless the consortium is restructured. BAe has been pressing for Airbus to become a plc for nearly a decade.

With Aerospaciale now apparently also committed to overhauling Airbus Mr Pierson said support for change was becoming overwhelming. "We are in the last hundred yards of the race and we are approaching crucial decisions," he said. "The enthusiasm is there now whereas 10 years ago there wasn't the spirit. Now all that has changed. The competition is tougher not just on price but on product and service and we have reached the point where everyone realises it is time to do something." Cost-cutting would be concentrated on the Airbus "bureaucracy".

STOCK MARKETS					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change(%)	1995/96 High	1995/96 Low
FTSE 100	3817.60	-15.40	-0.4	3857.10	3639.50
FTSE 250	4644.70	+4.60	+0.1	4544.70	4015.30
FTSE 350	1830.80	-5.80	-0.3	1945.40	1816.60
FT Small Cap	2206.88	+6.59	+0.3	2206.88	1954.06
FT All Share	1912.29	-47.33	-2.5	1924.17	1791.85
New York	5541.26	-162.17	-2.9	5541.26	5073.70
Tokyo	22282.05	+9.64	+0.1	22282.05	19734.70
Hong Kong	10998.89	-11.82	-0.5	11594.99	10073.39
Frankfurt	2538.26	-11.82	-0.5	2550.18	2253.88

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES							
Short sterling*		UK medium gilt†		US long bond			
*1000 lbs loan interest							
†Based 25/25/88							
Money Market Rates		Bond Yields *					
Rate	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Bond (%)	7 Year	Long Bond (%)	Year Ago	
UK	5.97	6.38	8.01	8.26	8.11	8.36	
UK	5.31	5.66	6.53	7.01	6.79	7.32	
US	0.53	0.91	2.39	2.56	-	-	
Germany	3.19	3.25	6.31	7.06	7.08	-	
Investment's Bulletin							
MAIN PRICE CHANGES							
INDEX	Price (p)	Change (p)	Change (%)	Falls	Price (p)	Change (p)	% Change
The Telegraph	559	96	20.7	Midlands Elec	371	40	9.7
Daily Mail	1823	123	8.2	Southern Electric	824	79	8.7
Slough Estates	235	13	5.9	East Midlands Elec	618	46	7.4

CURRENCIES					
Index	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago	Index	Yesterday
£/\$	1.5128	-0.18c	1.6108	£/DM	0.6810
£/¥	1.5140	-0.25c	1.6155	£/¥	0.6805
DM/\$	2.3023	+0.36c	2.2246	DM/£	1.5219
¥/\$	161.544	+0.334	135.509	¥/£	106.785
£/Index	84.0	unch	84.7	\$/Index	96.6

OTHER INDICATORS					
Index	Yesterday	Day's chg	Year Ago	Index	Yesterday
Oil Brent \$	20.35	+0.40	18.76	RPI	151.5
Gold \$	391.00	-0.70	390.00	GDP	107.0
Gold £	258.46	-0.19	241.64	Base Rates	-6.00pc

business

Institute of Directors: Norman Tebbit and Peter Lilley's view of Europe prevails at convention

Bosses say no to more social legislation

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

Business leaders voted seven to three against a single European currency and against the extension of EU social legislation to Britain at the Institute of Directors' annual convention yesterday.

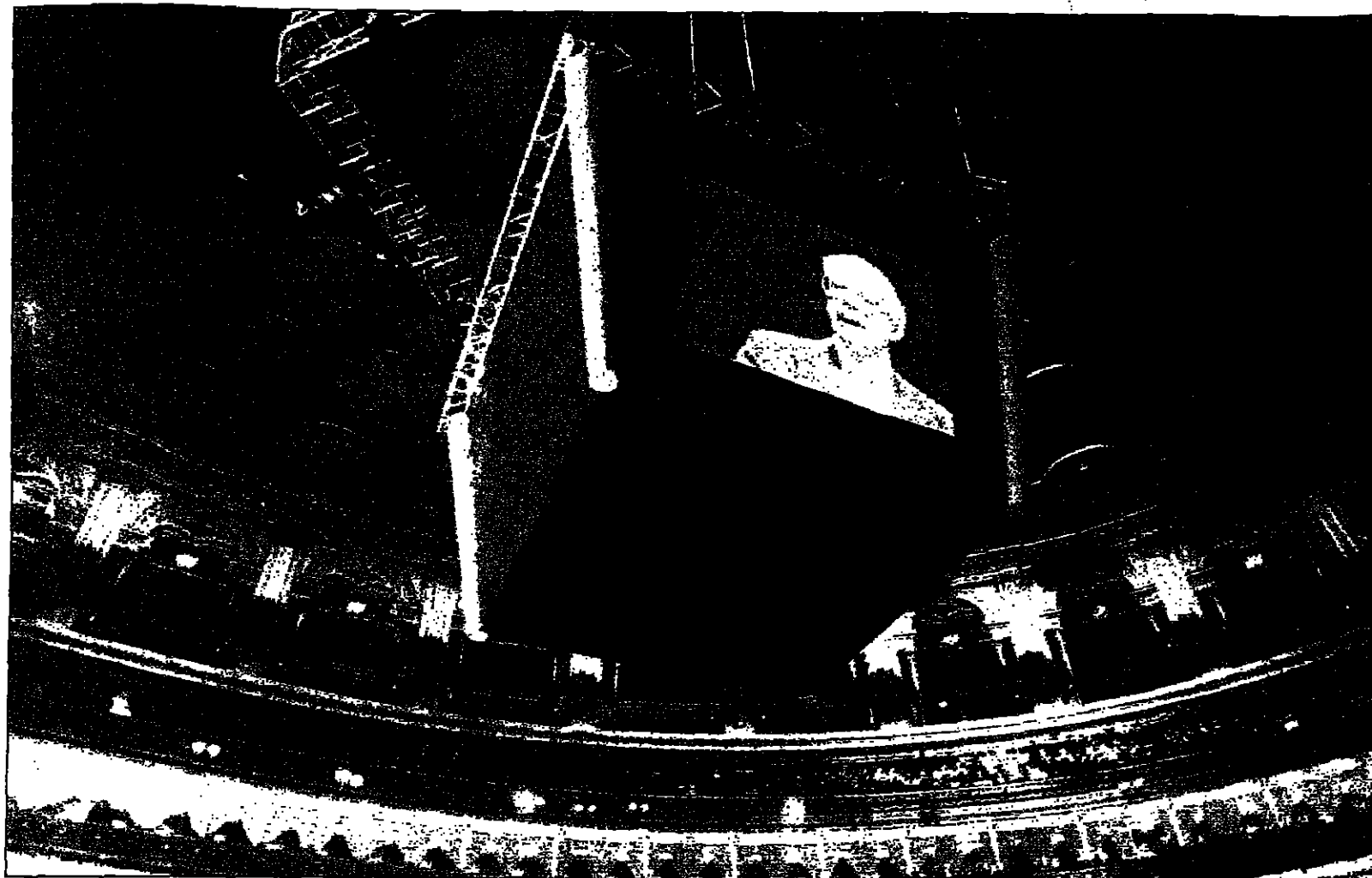
Overwhelmingly persuaded by the arguments of Lord Tebbit and Peter Lilley during the two-hour debates, the IoD's members agreed that the disadvantages of European Monetary Union outweighed its benefits and that Britain should be free to regulate its own labour market.

The bosses' organisation also called for big tax cuts. Tim Melville-Ross, director general, said: "Much more must be done to achieve significant reductions in both public expenditure and taxation. Capital gains tax and inheritance tax should be abolished right away, he argued, as the move would encourage wealth creation.

The debates on Europe followed a speech in which John Major, the Prime Minister, told delegates that although membership of the EU was central to Britain's prosperity, he would refuse to accept European social regulation.

Mr Major also pledged to continue to press on towards a 20p basic rate of income tax and the abolition of capital taxes. Government spending would fall back below 40 per cent of GDP, and the Government would keep an "arm-lock" on inflation, he said.

In typical fighting form, prominent Euro-sceptic Lord Tebbit told the audience that the economic benefits of a single



Hard image: John Major told the conference at the Albert Hall that he would refuse to accept European social regulation Photograph: Edward Webb

currency would be tiny. On the other hand, it would cause severe economic and political disruption, he warned.

"The economic advantages of the European currency are so small they were not even mentioned at Maastricht," Lord

Tebbit said. It was not "remotely likely" that European economies would converge, and the economic pressures created by the single currency would favour protectionism and extreme nationalism.

The euro was the ERM -

"eternal recession mechanism" - write large, he said.

Opposing these apocalyptic warnings, Georges Jacobs, chairman of the Federation of Belgian Industry, said British interest rates were already mainly determined by German ones.

Britain's interests would be best served by influencing European monetary policy from within the single currency. Europe also needed Britain as an advocate of pragmatism.

Separately, business confidence has increased and there

are signs of a potential upturn, according to a recent survey of IoD members.

"We are cautiously optimistic that these results may signal the return of that elusive feel-good factor," said Ruth Lea, head of policy.

Getting down to business at Oxford

Oxford University's own business school, Templeton College, has appointed an American anthropologist as its new president. Michael von Clemm is better known in the City as a former chairman of capital markets at Merrill Lynch, as well as having played an important role at White & Carter and Credit Suisse First Boston. He originally took a degree in anthropology, which no doubt proved useful in the understanding of traders and the like.

He has been in the UK for over 30 years and is joining Templeton, Oxford's newest

CITY DIARY

JOHN WILLCOCK

graduate college, at a delicate time in its development. The college is not just a hot-house for would-be industrialists; it is currently providing a high-profile series of courses for the Labour party on the management of change.

Potatoes to Italy. This is the sales success story for East Midlands company A&C Exports, which won a prize yesterday from the National Languages Export Campaign.

The company found that since it had embraced the "language and culture" strategy sponsored by the BBC its exports to non-English speaking countries had risen by 40 per cent. In particular, by recruiting a linguist, Karen Burdett, to go after the Italian market, the company discovered that they were trying to sell the wrong kind of spuds to the Italians. The latter want "Wijla" potatoes for their gnocchi, a type of potato ball. Sounds yummy.

There were a few predictable Euro-sceptic gibes at the Institute of Directors annual convention in the Albert Hall yesterday as speakers

like the Prime Minister and Lord Tebbit addressed the subject of "Europe".

The delegates voted solidly against both a single currency and the single chapter, so it was no surprise when Lord Tebbit blasted the conference's lunch which included French butter and Perrier Water. "Would the French IoD serve Malvern Water?" the former Chingford skinhead enquired? Delegates were asked to test the voting buttons in the hall: 83.7 per cent confirmed they were male, 14.9 per cent said they were female, and 1.4 per cent "didn't know," which tends to confirm what Continentals say about the English.

Those attending the shindig could quaff free champagne at the United Airlines stand, just after the new Audi 8 and gawp at a full-scale model of British Aerospace's latest fighter, the EF2000. Best of all, they were



Oxford: Teaching the Labour party about managing change

offered "a Champneys massage" courtesy of the health club of the same name.

Talk about poacher turned gamekeeper. The man who helped draft the Financial Services Act has just been hired by investment bank UBS. Mark Harding is leaving the giant law firm Clif-

ford Chance to a newly created senior post at UBS, that of general counsel. UK Harding was involved in the consultation process leading to the FSA and the Self Regulatory Organisation (SRO) rule book. He was also co-head of Clifford Chance's Derivatives Group. A useful man to know.

IN BRIEF

• The UK's oil and gas production industry is still setting records decades after the first offshore fields were discovered. Industry and Energy Minister Tim Eggar said yesterday when the 1996 Brown Book was published, setting out oil and gas production industry figures for 1995. Highlights in the Brown Book include: total oil production at its highest level yet at 130 billion tonnes, up from 127 billion tonnes in 1994; gas production at its highest level yet at 75 billion cubic metres, up from 70 billion cubic metres in 1994; more oil and gas fields in production than ever before, up to 163 at the end of 1995 from 149 at the end of 1994; and total company income for the sector was £18bn, including a record £4bn from the gas production sector.

• Philips Electronics, Europe's largest electronics maker, reported a 31 per cent slump in first-quarter net profits to 377m guilders (£156m) as semiconductor sales slipped and weak demand hurt the consumer electronics unit. Looking ahead, the company said it did not expect much improvement until the second half of the year, while full-year sales growth would be slower than the 4 per cent increase reported for 1995. "I don't see a sudden bounce-back of growth in the second quarter, rather a recovery of momentum," said Dudley Eustace, chief financial officer. Bloomberg.

• Bell Atlantic and Nynex have agreed to pay each other \$550m (£364m) if a competing bid disrupts their planned \$22bn merger, announced earlier this week. The payments, outlined in a copy of the agreement filed yesterday with the Securities and Exchange Commission, would be made by Nynex if it accepted an outside offer. Bell Atlantic would, in turn, make the payments if it ended up with an alternative partner. Under the agreement, Bell Atlantic and Nynex promised not to seek other offers. However, the companies have an obligation to their shareholders to consider an unsolicited bid that might be more lucrative than the current agreement. Bloomberg.

• Amersham International is increasing its shareholding in Nitoh Medi-Physics, its Japanese diagnostic pharmaceuticals joint venture with Sumitomo Chemical Co, in exchange for ¥8.28bn (£51.4m) cash, together with the transfer of its Japanese healthcare business to NMP. Amersham said the move was part of an agreement to accelerate the merger of Amersham and Sumitomo's healthcare businesses in Japan.

• BTR has sold Plascoat International and Plascoat Coatings (Holdings) BV to management for a total £30.5m cash. Ian Strachan, BTR chief executive, said: "The disposal continues our stated strategy of focusing on core industrial manufacturing businesses. Plascoat specialises in plastic coating technology and plastic components, whilst BTR's other polymer activities utilise different technologies and, in the main, serve different markets."

• BET stepped up its attack on Rentokil, claiming that an academic study showed that the bidder's shares would underperform if it won the £2bn bid battle, due to close tomorrow. An investigation by Kjell Nyborg, assistant professor of finance at the London Business School, showed that Rentokil's share price could fall by 8 per cent "very quickly" after the acquisition, representing a loss of some £440m of shareholder value. BET also claimed that a merger would result in the combined group having negative net worth of £229m and net debt of at least £776m. Rentokil sources rubbished the BET assertions.

• Hanson has paid £24m for Boral Edenhall, at Penrith, Cumbria. It employs 250 and operates seven concrete block plants, a sand and gravel quarry and four concrete brick factories.

• JJB Sports has announced a 70 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £13m and a one-for-two bonus issue of shares. Announcing profits of £13m, JJB founder David Whelan said the store opening programme would be accelerated with 20 high street and 20 out-of-town shops scheduled to open in the current year. Poor weather in January and February has dampened trading in the current year with like-for-like sales only up by 1 per cent.

• Redland said it owned 7.68 million Ennemix ordinary shares, about 40.16 per cent of the issued ordinary share capital, after purchases in the stock market. This follows Redland's revised and final takeover bid of 35p cash per Ennemix share a fortnight ago.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Bank of Scotland F	545m (449m)	25.8p (22.3p)	24.4p	
Rentokil F	86m (23.1m)	1.2m (2.5m)	1.7p (8.7p)	1.8p
Decca F	33.8m (25.9m)	3.1m (2.1m)	9.8p (6.6p)	4.1p
Essex Farm F	44.3m (17.7m)	1.2m (1.4m)		2.1p
Midland Bar F	65.9m (50.2m)	9.2m (8.2m)	23.9p (20.9p)	4.4p
Rea F	100.2m (88.7m)	1.6m (1.4m)	8.1p (7.8p)	4p
SUS F	84.7m (61.8m)	7m (6m)	37.8p (33p)	12.5p
JJB Sports F	89.8m (61.3m)	12.8m (7.6m)	27.7p (18.7p)	6p
xxxxxxxxxxxx	11.3m (8.22m)	2.05m (1.70m)	13.2p (11.4p)	2.6p (2.4p)

(F) - Profit (I) - Income (M) - Nine months

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THE INDEPENDENT
section two

Accepting Rentokil offer is best BET

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

Decision time is looming for shareholders in BET, the cleaning to plant hire group, who have until tomorrow to make up their minds about the £2bn bid from Rentokil. Contrary to expectations earlier in the bid, the outcome is now an extremely close call.

BET has staged a remarkable come-back during the course of the battle, which most had assumed would be a walk-over for Rentokil. Perhaps sensitive to accusations of short-termism, many institutional shareholders have not been prepared to write-off the efforts of John Clark, the chief executive who arrived five years ago with a brief to turn around the disparate, heavily-indebted group.

Institutions holding over 17 per cent of its shares have publicly declared their support for the management, an impressive affirmation of their faith in BET, given that big shareholders normally keep their powder dry until the last moment in a bid. Strategically, BET has a number of arguments supporting its claims to remain independent. Rentokil's growth record has been based on applying its management formula to a series of in-fill acquisitions for cash. Its only experience of a hostile bid was the takeover of Securiguard in a £90m deal nearly three years ago. The addition of BET would triple the group's turnover, add 100,000 employees and raise the number of shares in issue by 43 per cent.

On top of that, Rentokil's claim that its businesses have a 75 per cent overlap with BET does not stand up to close scrutiny. It has no experience of plant hire and, on its own admission, the two transport businesses operate in different areas of the market.

The impression that the bidder is about to bid off more than it can chew was supported by the release yesterday of a piece of BET-sponsored academic research purporting to show that shares tend to underperform after large acquisitions of related businesses.

Perhaps the most telling weapon in

BET's armoury is that Rentokil's offer is hardly a knock-out blow. The exit multiple would fall from over 19 times historic earnings to below 17, assuming BET's dividend forecast of 6.15p for the current year translates into earnings of 13p. That compares with over 20p for Rentokil.

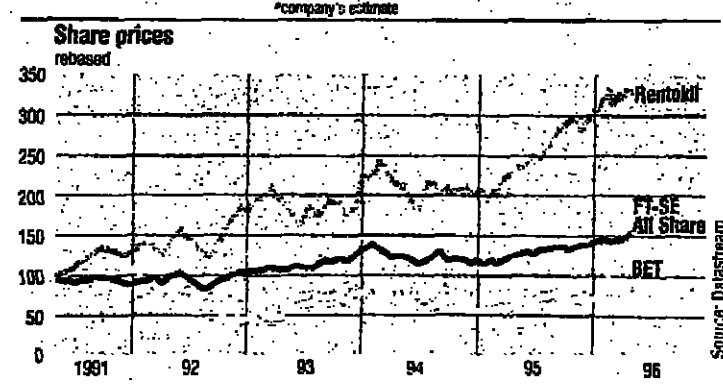
But this is likely to prove academic. It is hard to argue with the impressive 14-year record of earnings growth of at least 20 per cent a year overseen by chief executive Clive Thompson at Rentokil. Scare stories of 900 per cent gearing at Rentokil post the bid are wide of the mark, given the group's prodigious cash generation.

By comparison, Mr Clark's record can charitably be described as pedestrian, reflected in the relative share price performance of the two groups. Accept the Rentokil offer.

Bank of Scotland fails to please

The Bank of Scotland tried to please yesterday with a 17.7 per cent rise in the full-year dividend, but the market was not impressed and dropped the shares a further 3 per cent to 251p.

	BET	Rentokil
Market value:	£1.94bn	£3.53bn
Share price:	204p	357.5p
Trading record		
Turnover (£bn)	1.97 1.75 1.94	0.59 0.72 0.84
Pre-tax profits (£m)	92 122 146	147 177 215
Earnings per share (p)	6.9 10.4 11.1	9.71 11.7 14.2
Dividend per share (p)	3.25 4.0 5.1	2.85 3.45 4.20



Results for the year to end-February were respectable, with a 16-per cent increase to £484m in pre-tax profits excluding non-recurring items and the higher-than-expected rise in the payout was expected to be seen as an expression of confidence. But the market only had eyes for a strong rise in costs which, excluding the impact of the recent acquisition of Bank of Western Australia, increased by a little over 14 per cent.

Operating profits before bad-debt provisions only managed a 5-per cent increase, leaving a productivity gap that had investors twitching. Peter Burt, who assumes the role of chief executive on 1 June, sought to allay fears, saying the rate of increase in costs is expected to slow during the year, and the bank does not expect its cost/income ratio to rise.

At 52 per cent, Bank of Scotland (BoS) has a cost/income ratio that the other established high-street banks can only envy from afar. NatWest, for instance, is aiming to get down to around 60 per cent by the end of the decade. On that score, the market's reaction yesterday seemed a little harsh, but there is considerable nervousness around about any business where costs are felt to be going in the wrong direction.

As one of British banking's relative small fry, along with Royal Bank of Scotland, the BoS remains a potential takeover target, and is therefore obliged to pursue a more aggressive growth strategy. That makes life more risky, but in the longer term the benefits could come through. With last year's bid fever having worn off, BoS shares have settled to a level now looking cheapish, trading at 9 times 1996 earnings, compared to a sector average of 10 times. The shares are certainly worth holding, but whether investors will want to buy depends

largely on risk appetite, and whether one feels the economy is set to give the sector a smooth ride over the coming years. In that positive scenario, and taking Mr Burt's cost caution at face value, the earnings potential could be rewarding.

Tottenham times it right

The timing of Alan Sugar's £11m rights issue at Tottenham Hotspur is as deft as a Teddy Sheringham run into the penalty box. Football shares are flavour of the month in the City at the moment as investors wake up to the revenue-earning potential of big clubs, particularly from television rights. Tottenham shares have more than doubled since last autumn and rose another 14p to 324p yesterday.

Priced at 270p, the one for four rights issue is pitched at a decent discount. Mr Sugar is not taking up his rights and more than 2 million of his shares will be placed with institutions. The new cash will fund a new stand and increase the ground capacity by 3,000 to 36,000. Other revenue streams also look strong. The club has 12,000 season-ticket holders which means the club gets paid in advance. It has also signed lucrative four-year sponsorship deals with Hewlett Packard and Pony. Merchandising revenue from new kits is also healthy.

But the real pot of gold that could send football club shares sky-high is television revenue. The BSkyB deal with the Premier League runs out at the end of next season and the new contract is likely to be far more lucrative. Add to this the prospect of European competitions and possibly pay-per-view television and football clubs profits will soar. Tottenham's decision to reduce the value of its players' in its balance sheet by £6.8m will knock profits this year but investors should be looking further ahead than that. Take up the rights.



COMMENT

'Mr Lang's insistence yesterday that competition is not yet sufficiently developed to allow vertical integration on this scale, may hold water, but in large measure it is also an excuse for political expediency'

The clock cannot be turned back on power bids

Is this the end of the great electricity take-away? Ian Lang's wholly unexpected decision to block the two generating bids for regional distribution companies would certainly seem to suggest so. Everything the Trade Secretary has done and said since he took up the post indicated that he was of the same view on mergers and takeovers as his predecessor, Michael Heseltine - big is beautiful and if it results in the creation of national champions, anything goes.

Indeed, when Ed Wallis, chief executive of PowerGen, first floated the idea of bidding for Midlands Electricity with Mr Lang and other ministers last summer, all the indications were that the Government accepted the arguments - an industry dominated by four or five "vertically integrated" players combining generation and distribution would mean a more competitive electricity market. But that was last summer, when the election was a long way away and the Conservatives had a respectable majority.

Calling a halt to the takeover frenzy is essentially a political decision. Mr Lang's insistence yesterday that competition is not yet sufficiently developed to allow vertical integration on this scale, may hold water, but in large measure it is also an excuse for political expediency. Safeguards could have been put in place to address these concerns. There was nothing to stop Mr Lang bolstering the remedies suggested by the MMC. Instead he has chosen to block the bids entirely and no doubt saved a few votes in the process.

Scottish Power and Manweb? That seemed okay. So too was PowerGen and Midlands, just about. But when National Power took it all a stage further and bid for Southern Electricity, Mr Lang got the spins. Then finally along came the Americans to put the kibosh on the whole thing with a bid for National Power itself. Politically this was the bid too far. The feeding frenzy had to stop and Mr Lang, egged on by right-wing backbenchers, was finally forced to act.

It is hard to see how the Americans can now bid for National Power, unless they sell off their already acquired distribution company, Sweb. But equally this is an industry fundamentally changed by the bid activity - both fruitless and fruitful - of the last six months. The clock cannot be turned back now. National Power will have to justify the sky-high valuation it has achieved in the stock market. That may mean either gearing itself up or breaking itself up by selling off generating capacity piece-meal to all the other distribution companies just dying to do an Eastern. Either way, there is a fee or two left in this sector for the City yet.

Giving thanks for Conrad Black's gall

You have to admire Conrad Black's gall. Having sold shares just weeks before the *Telegraph* cut its price from 48p to 30p, mislaying the company's broker in the process,

he is now offering to buy them back again just before a promised price rise that will all but restore the profitable status quo ante.

The *Telegraph's* long-suffering shareholders would be forgiven for thinking the buccaneering Canadian was trying it on again, buying back the business just as newspaper costs start to fall and advertising revenue follows consumer spending up in the second half of this year. Even if they do take that view, however, they will probably simply give thanks that an often hostile four-year marriage is coming to a reasonably amicable divorce.

The proposed deal can also be seen as a triumph for the company's independent directors who rightly raised two fingers to last year's opportunistic stab at taking the papers private for a cheeky price of around 450p a share. Even if another 5p cover price rise is pushed through soon, it seems unlikely that the shares would have traded at 570p on the basis of fundamental investment measures for quite some time.

For anyone who has been a shareholder since the 325p placing in 1992, the deal represents a 75 per cent capital appreciation which compares pretty favourably with the 58 per cent rise in the All Share during the same period. At only a whisker below the price at which Hollinger sold 179m of shares two years ago, Mr Black finally seems to be acting with honour.

Ethical niceties aside, he is also plainly the only realistic buyer in town of the minority

shares. The sizeable advantage to him of being able to consolidate The *Telegraph's* cash flows to expand the rest of the Hollinger empire means the shares were always going to be worth more to him than anyone else. The company's share price has always reflected market's scepticism about investing in companies controlled by media tycoons. The nagging doubt about just whose benefit the company is being run for is a good enough reason for taking Mr Black's money and leaving him to it.

The invisible face of the single market

The single European market is no doubt a wonderful thing, but the fact remains that in some industries it is still virtually non-existent. The most important of these is probably pharmaceuticals, an industry where Britain has developed some leading world class companies. This is obviously a sensitive and highly regulated business, but the insistence of member states on retaining national control of pricing and product approval policy is making a nonsense of the whole idea of a single market.

The problem is that though prices are set separately for each country, the EU insists on free trade between them. In such cases it is only natural that prices should gravitate to the lowest defined level - which for phar-

maceuticals are generally those of Spain. You could argue that it is perfectly reasonable for the country with the lowest prices to set the benchmark. But this would be short sighted. One of the reasons why Britain and others allow a higher margin is to encourage pharmaceutical companies to invest in research and development and bring new products to the market.

This may go against most free market principles, but the policy works. Unsurprisingly, Spain doesn't have much of a pharmaceutical industry. Unless the problem is urgently addressed by the EC, the effect will be to undermine the pharmaceutical industry across Europe as a whole - it will go elsewhere. Leon Brittan's pea-brained response to the issue is to suggest companies simply withdraw their product from markets where they have a problem. As a former lawyer, the Trade Commissioner should know better. Refusal to supply is regarded legally as tantamount to surrendering patent protection.

Plans for a single European pricing and product approval agency, the obvious solution, were put forward a little while back but thrown out by the European Parliament. As with so many things, EU members want to have their cake and eat it. They want the benefits of the single market, but they also want to retain the tools of national control. With all regulated industries, the two things are largely incompatible. There has to be one rule for all. In pharmaceuticals at least, the EC seems incapable of providing it.

Frosty reception for platinum merger

MAGNUS GRIMOND

The European Commission has emphatically rejected the proposed \$1.9bn (£1.26bn) merger of the platinum interests of Britain's Lonrho and Gencor of South Africa, and warned that it would block any further move to restrict competition in the industry.

The EU's competition directorate said the combination would have left two groups dominating the platinum market, controlling 28 per cent of the market, with Anglo Amer-

ican Platinum, part of the eponymous South African mining giant, holding 35 per cent.

Tiny Rowland, Lonrho's ousted chief executive, welcomed the decision. A spokesman said: "It is very good for shareholders because it was a bad deal. Now the board can try again and enhance shareholder value."

But the European veto is a blow to the current management of both companies. The blocked deal involved folding cross shareholdings in South Africa's Eastern and Western

Platinum groups into Gencor's Impala Platinum to create a group to rival Anglo American's Rustenberg Platinum operation.

Competition commissioner Karel Van Miert said the Lonrho-Gencor merger "clearly created a duopoly able to influence, in a very considerable way, market and prices". The veto, only the fifth since the commission assumed its competition powers in 1990, sent "a clear signal" that the commission wants to keep three companies in the platinum market, Mr Van Miert said. Any attempt

by Anglo American to take control of Lonrho would create "a similar problem" to the proposed Gencor-Lonrho alliance and would therefore probably be blocked, he added.

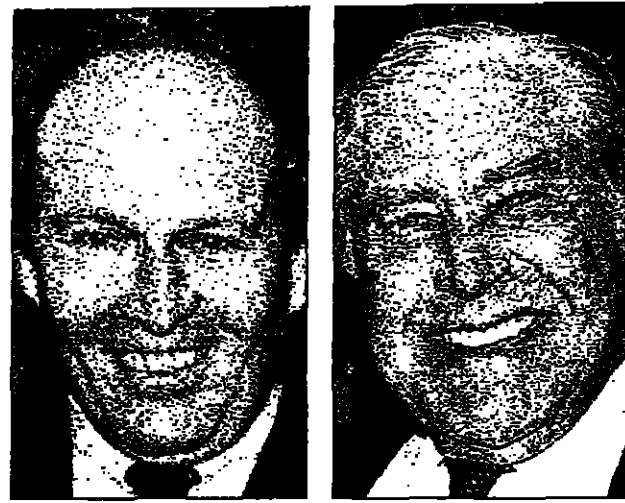
Michael McMahon, chairman of Impala Platinum, said they would appeal against the Commission's decision. "The Commission has ignored compelling evidence that this merger is based on the soundest competitive rationale", he said. Mr McMahon said he was "puzzled" by the decision, given that the merger would have had

very little effect on European consumers.

Lonrho shares fell a further 0.5 pence to 197.5p. Although Lonrho and Gencor are likely to look at ways of restructuring the deal to obtain approval, Mr Van Miert indicated that he could see no way for any similar merger to go ahead.

About a fifth of all platinum sales take place in the EU, giving the commission a say in what happens in the industry. Mr Van Miert said. The decision was taken with the "sympathy" of the South African government.

Different views: Dieter Bock (left) chief executive of Lonrho, and the group's ousted chief Tiny Rowland



Different views: Dieter Bock (left) chief executive of Lonrho, and the group's ousted chief Tiny Rowland



Moving the goalposts: Spurs chairman Alan Sugar yesterday Photograph: Tony Buckingham

Spurs rights issue to net £11m for new stand

NIGEL COPE

Tottenham Hotspur, the quoted Premier League football club, is raising £11m through a rights issue to build a new North Stand which will increase the capacity at its White Hart Lane ground to 36,000.

However, Spurs chairman Alan Sugar also revealed that the club is cutting the value of its players' registrations by a third in the light of the recent Bosman ruling on the transfer of out-of-contract players.

The registrations of Spurs players are currently valued at £20.8m in the Tottenham balance sheet. The club said it was "considering an adjustment" of £6.8m which will appear as an exceptional item in the current year accounts.

The decision is likely to force other clubs to follow suit although it will not affect Manchester United, one of the other top quoted clubs, as the club

does not treat its players as assets on its balance sheet. "It is our view and that of our auditors and anyone with half a brain that the transfer system as we know it is on its last legs," Mr Sugar said.

He said transfer fees were likely to fall as a result and that smaller clubs may find themselves robbed of windfall gains from selling star players to larger clubs. Under the Bosman ruling, clubs cannot demand transfer fees for out of contract players who move to other clubs within the European Union. Mr Sugar said the effect on Spurs would be minimal as the club's "superstar" players were on four-year contracts.

But he warned that players' wages would have to be covered by club's operating incomes, such as television revenue, gate receipts and merchandising, rather than from the sale of players.

Spurs plans to use the £11m

raised from its rights issue to redevelop the North Stand at White Hart Lane and complete the development of the South Stand. The club's £5.8m debts will also be reduced through none of the rights issue cash will go to buy players.

Work on the North Stand should start towards the end of next season and be completed for the start of the new season in August 1997. The existing stand is likely to be closed for four or five games at the end of next year which will mean a slight loss of revenue.

The one-for-four rights issue is priced at 270p. Mr Sugar is not taking up his rights (which would cost him more than £5m). His stake will fall from 51 per cent to 41 per cent and his 2m-share entitlement will be taken up by institutions.

Tottenham is forecasting a final dividend of 3p. The shares closed 14p higher at 324p.

Investment column, page 20

CINMan may split British Coal sale

NIC CICUTTI

The £17bn British Coal pension fund, whose ultimate disposal has dragged on for more than a year, may now be sold off in two parts instead of one, it was revealed yesterday.

Trustees of the CIN Management (CINMan) fund are believed to have agreed that if it cannot be sold in one slice it may be divided to make it more attractive to potential bidders.

The most likely split will be between a larger marketable securities fund worth £15bn and a smaller property one worth about £1.5bn. However, sources indicated yesterday that a successful outcome to negotiations with potential purchasers was still weeks away. Any deal would end months of uncertainty for the fund, which has been linked with a number of purchasers, including Hambros and Société Générale.

In February, a £70m sale of CINMan to Friends Provident, the mutual life insurer was set to take place, but the two parties failed to iron out last-minute problems.

Barry Southcott, former CINMan chief executive, is believed to have been a victim of the failed sale when he resigned in February.

Robeco, the Dutch insurer, is also among those to have expressed an interest, but talks foundered within weeks.

Since then, CINMan has faced considerable difficulties in attracting new buyers. The potential split into two funds is the latest strategy aimed at disposing of the coal pension fund.

The fund's trustees are believed to have said that they would still prefer to see the sale take place with the fund as one entity.

FINANCIAL NEWS
FROM BANK OF SCOTLAND

Bank of Scotland Annual Results

	1996	1995
TOTAL PROFIT FROM GROUP OPERATIONS		
BEFORE PROVISIONS	£706.4m	£650.0m
PROFIT BEFORE TAXATION	£545.0m	£449.7m
TOTAL CAPITAL RESOURCES	£3,533m	£2,731m
TOTAL ASSETS	£44,099m	£34,104m
EARNINGS PER ORDINARY STOCK UNIT	25.8p	22.3p
DIVIDEND PER ORDINARY STOCK UNIT	6.85p	5.82p

- Total profit from Group operations before provisions a record £706.4 million
- Profit before taxation up 21 per cent on 1995
- Dividend increased by 17.7 per cent
- Cost : Income ratio 52.1 per cent



BANK OF SCOTLAND
A FRIEND FOR LIFE

For a copy of the Bank's Annual Report contact the Marketing Services and Public Relations Department, Bank of Scotland, Usher House, PO Box 12, 61 Grassmarket, Edinburgh EH1 2JF.

L&G set to axe unit trust charges

NIC CICUTTI

Legal & General, one of the UK's largest insurers, is poised to launch a unit trust war by axing initial charges across virtually its entire range of funds.

The company's move could slash hundreds of pounds off the initial charges of 5-6 per cent paid by savers on their unit trust investments. If L&G, which has struggled in the past to attract a sizeable inflow of savers' money, succeeds in increasing its market share significantly, other unit trust providers may be forced to follow suit.

Michael Hayden, managing director of L&G Unit Trust

Managers, said yesterday: "We are reviewing our prices. It is our intention to move in that direction. There are still some technical details to overcome, but we hope to have the whole thing in place in the summer."

Instead of a large one-off initial charge, L&G intends to levy a sliding scale of charges, beginning at 5 per cent if funds are withdrawn in year one.

Mr Hayden added that the company had no intention of increasing its annual management fees of 1.25-1.5 per cent to compensate for the disappearance of the up-front charge.

L&G's decision extends the price war that has long existed

in the tax-free personal equity plan sector in unit trusts. For several years now, Peps have been sold more cheaply than unit trusts, reflecting tough competition in that market.

Last year the insurer dropped initial charges on its PEP products. Since then, demand for L&G Peps has more than tripled beyond the £40m it sold in 1994-95.

The company, which won 1 per cent of the £4bn unit trust market in the 1995-96 tax year, hopes to build up its sales in the same way.

Julia Eynon, assistant marketing director at Morgan Grenfell, a large unit trust

provider, said: "We do not plan to go down the same route at present. Our research shows that more than 60 per cent of investors believe performance is more important than charges."

Gareth Marr, a director at Moores Mary Bradley, a top financial advice firm in the South-east said: "What this shows is that disclosure of charges works in favour of consumers. I would have no problem with L&G's charging structure. Its performance is among the better ones. I would have thought that if providers want to maintain market share they will have to compete."

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Old master's theory fails to solve New Labour dilemma

ECONOMIC VIEW
DIANE COYLE

The most influential work of John Maynard Keynes, the great economist who died 50 years ago last weekend, was forged by the Great Depression. With unemployment and job insecurity once again the scourge of the big industrialised economies, Keynes's analysis sought to have a new relevance half-a-century after his death.

In 1933, when unemployment in Britain stood at 24m or 19.9 per cent of the workforce, Keynes recommended an extra £100m a year in government spending to tackle the problem directly through the creation of public-sector jobs. That is the equivalent of £4bn today, when we have unemployment of around 2m or 8 per cent.

Yet it is only necessary to state the figure to realise how little faith today's policy-makers have in simple Keynesian solutions. It is not as if £4bn is very much money in the context of total public spending. Politicians evidently do not have faith in either the diagnosis or prescription.

New Labour politicians especially would not dream of making extra spending commitments to cut unemployment, and not just because they fear the "tax-and-spend" label. They are committed to supply-side policies - such as better education and reform of the benefit system - in order to improve growth and create the incentives that will get people back to work. It is hard to imagine anything further from Keynes's emphasis on the lack of demand in the economy as the source of the unemployment problem.

There is an interesting parallel between New Labour and the Labour Party of the 1930s, which was equally resistant to Keynesian ideas. Keynes's 1936 masterpiece, *The*

'British socialism assumed capitalism had solved the economic problem'

General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money, made no impact on economic policies until the start of the Second World War. Before the war, the government was spending to tackle the problem directly through the creation of public-sector jobs. That is the equivalent of £4bn today, when we have unemployment of around 2m or 8 per cent.

Yet it is only necessary to state the figure to realise how little faith today's policy-makers have in simple Keynesian solutions. It is not as if £4bn is very much money in the context of total public spending. Politicians evidently do not have faith in either the diagnosis or prescription.

pression posed a serious policy dilemma - but one Labour did not resolve by a wholesale embrace of Keynesianism.

After the war, facing a transformed economic landscape with a hugely increased government sector, the economic establishment embraced and absorbed Keynes's ideas into the mainstream of theory. Keynesianism became the new orthodoxy.

Rising inflation subsequently led economists to revise Keynesian the-

ory. Monetary theory was welded to Keynes's basic framework. The classic illustration is the Phillips Curve, the negative link between unemployment and wage or price inflation observed in Britain in the 1950s.

In its simple form, this suggested the government could choose to "buy" lower unemployment with higher inflation. However, the curve broke down. Over time a given level of unemployment was not associated with higher and higher rates of inflation. Milton Friedman and others introduced expectations of future inflation into the wage-bargaining process and showed that the simple trade-off would become

more unfavourable over time as wages were bid up to compensate for the expected inflation.

The state of the economy worsened in the 1970s with stagflation - high inflation with low or zero growth - which proved impervious to Keynesian remedies. Higher inflation did not "buy" any gains. As the economic consensus could not remedy it, alternative monetarist theories blossomed. These emphasised the monetary side of the economy, to which Keynes had paid relatively little attention in his *General Theory*, and recommended that the government should follow rules setting targets for monetary growth rather than actively trying to manage the level of demand in the economy.

A second blow to the post-war consensus came from economists' attempts to weld macroeconomics, based on Keynes's work, with microeconomics, drawn from earlier theories basing economic behaviour on rational choices by individuals. The motive was economists' perpetual desire to prove that their subject, with its testable theories and equations, is closer to a real science than are other social sciences. But the hunt for microeconomic foundations for macroeconomic behaviour ended with economic models that patently bore almost no relation to the facts.

Take the "rational expectations hypothesis", for which University of Chicago economist Robert Lucas was the Nobel Prize last year. In essence this says that individuals do not make consistent mistakes in their expectations of the future. Rationality dictates that consistent errors would be corrected, so there are



Relevant: John Maynard Keynes revolutionised economic theory

only random mistakes in, say, price expectations. This is too powerful a premise for most economists to reject, trained as they are to base their analysis on the notion of rational "economic agents".

The trouble is that applying rational expectations leads to predictions that are not consistent with the facts - for example, that there is not

even any short-term trade-off between jobs and inflation. Much of the economics profession these days spends its time either drawing up more complicated abstract models that might fit the real world better, or looking for a more acceptable set of facts.

This is the uncomfortable position in which the subject remains. There

is no academic consensus about how the economy works, as a crop of books with titles such as *The Death of Economics* and *The Crisis of 17-18th Century Economic Thought* bear witness. At the same time there is an orthodoxy amongst politicians that emphasises old-fashioned fiscal and monetary prudence at a time when the most pressing problem in the big industrial economies is, once again, mass unemployment and, in some cases, deflation.

Although this might suggest that the time is ripe to go back to Keynesian basics, this is unlikely to provide a solution. Not only is there no sympathy anywhere along the political spectrum for the notion that bigger government is desirable, there are also key elements in today's economy that were absent in the 1930s, and so were not addressed by the master. These include the wave of rapid technological change and the diminished economic relevance of national boundaries.

If New Labour is to escape the yoke of the current free market and sound money orthodoxy, it needs a new visionary. In his essay, written nearly a quarter of a century ago, Lord Skidelsky said: "Now the Keynesian consensus in turn is breaking down and we have to see how the Labour Party will confront the reappearance of its old dilemmas: the lack of any success to mobilise... Twenty-four years on, the lack of success in the industrial economies is even more apparent, and the dilemma more acute."

The Death of Economics by Paul Omerod, Faber & Faber
The Crisis of 17th Century Economic Thought by Robert Hellbroner and William Milberg, Cambridge University Press

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	Spot	1 month	3 months
US	1528	9.7	21.6	1000	-	-
Canada	20581	11.3	50.37	13805	-	-
Germany	23023	53.46	159.48	12819	27.25	84.81
France	77794	149.16	371.340	53598	84.57	164.54
Italy	19243	75.92	221.246	12561	57.64	170.92
Japan	16154	75.70	225.216	106.79	45.44	138.33
ECU	12232	15.1	45.40	12368	7.8	23.25
Belgium	47320	12.9	34.29	31280	6.5	18.18
Denmark	33794	175.13	529.438	56895	85.45	270.220
Netherlands	25771	68.59	197.84	13855	35.32	107.12
Ireland	10982	10.6	24.18	14580.7	10.17	24.10
Norway	98923	116.64	329.233	65391	42.17	110.60
Spain	19135	26.35	72.89	12548	23.27	64.72
Sweden	13205	9.5	23.34	67586	98.123	280.210
Switzerland	18657	69.80	197.165	12233	38.35	111.05
Australia	13242	19.21	57.25	12414	19.21	54.58
Hong Kong	17103	10.61	224.770	72557	2.12	15.35
Malaysia	37820	0.0	0.0	25000	4.14	15.627
New Zealand	22210	43.57	133.156	14580	30.32	88.90
Saudi Arabia	55732	0.0	0.0	37501	2.7	9.14
Singapore	21828	0.0	0.0	14098	41.30	123.88

Interest Rates

Country	Rate	Country	Rate	Country	Rate
UK	6.00%	Germany	2.50%	US	5.75%
France	6.00%	Denmark	4.50%	Belgium	5.00%
Italy	3.70%	Canada	7.00%	Spain	5.25%
Japan	5.50%	Sweden	5.00%	Portugal	10.00%
Netherlands	4.00%	Switzerland	3.25%	South Korea	10.00%
Australia	2.75%	Denmark	4.50%	Republic of Korea	10.00%

Bond Yields

Country	5yr yield	10yr yield	Country	5yr yield	10yr yield
UK	8.00%	7.42	Germany	5.27	6.27
US	5.75%	5.41	France	6.46	6.93
Japan	6.4%	6.21	Spain	10.74	9.10
Australia	8.75%	8.41	Italy	10.74	9.10
Canada	6.75%	6.41	Belgium	7.4%	6.58
Sweden	5.5%	5.51	Sweden	5.5%	5.51

Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement price	High/Low for day	Estimate	Open Interest
Long GB	105.04	105.09	105.01	7843
German Bond	105.04	105.09	105.01	10585
Italian Bond	105.04	105.09	105.01	10585
3M Sterling	105.04	105.09	105.01	10585
3M Eurodollar	105.04	105.09	105.01	10585

Life FT-SE Index Option

Settlement price	Closing offer price	Call/Put	Total
Settlement price	3821.0		
Call	3750		3750
Put	3821.0		3821.0

Industrial Metals

Commodity	Price	Commodity	Price	Commodity	Price
Aluminum HG	572.5-725	Aluminum LG	572.5-725	Aluminum HG	572.5-725
Copper A	2675-78	Copper B	2675-78	Copper A	2675-78
Lead	809-11	Lead	809-11	Lead	809-11
Nickel	7940-50	Nickel	7940-50	Nickel	7940-50
Zinc	10345-355	Zinc	10345-355	Zinc	10345-355

Precious Metals

Commodity	Price	Commodity	Price	Commodity	Price
Platinum	2535-405	Platinum	2535-405	Platinum	2535-405
Palladium	8825-1350	Palladium	8825-1350	Palladium	8825-1350
Silver spot	532	Silver spot	532	Silver spot	532
Gold Bull	360.80	Gold Bull	360.80	Gold Bull	360.80

Other Spot Rates

Country	Spot	Country	Spot	Country	Spot
Argentina	1529	Nigeria	12705	South Africa	6454
Australia	16382	Oman	10827	South Africa	6454
Brazil	14999	Pakistan	32375	South Africa	6454
Canada	20581	Philippines	262200	South Africa	6454
France	77794	Portugal	23579	South Africa	6454

Money Market Rates

Overnight	1 Week	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
Overnight	4.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6
1 Week	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6
1 Month	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6

Tourist Rates

Country	Rate	Country	Rate	Country	Rate
Australia	16382	France	77794	Germany	23023
Canada	20581	Italy	19243	Japan	16154
Denmark	33794	Netherlands	47320	Sweden	13205

Commodity Indices

Index	Value	Index	Value	Index	Value
Index	100	Index	100	Index	100
Index	100	Index	100	Index	100

Energy

Commodity	Price	Commodity	Price	Commodity	Price
Crude Oil	25.35	Crude Oil	25.35	Crude Oil	25.35
Natural Gas	1.25	Natural Gas	1.25	Natural Gas	1.25
Coal	10.00	Coal	10.00	Coal	10.00

Agricultural

Commodity	Price	Commodity	Price	Commodity	Price
Wheat	1.25	Wheat	1.25	Wheat	1.25
Corn	1.25	Corn	1.25	Corn	1.25
Soybeans	1.25	Soybeans	1.25	Soybeans	1.25

Other Softs

Commodity	Price	Commodity	Price	Commodity	Price
Cocoa	1.25	Cocoa	1.25	Cocoa	1.25
Rubber	1.25	Rubber	1.25	Rubber	1.25
Sugar	1.25	Sugar	1.25	Sugar	1.25

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Unit Trust	Price	Unit Trust	Price	Unit Trust	Price
Unit Trust	1.25	Unit Trust	1.25	Unit Trust	1.25
Unit Trust	1.25	Unit Trust	1.25	Unit Trust	1.25
Unit Trust	1.25	Unit Trust	1.25	Unit Trust	1.25

F1 RACING

THE INDEPENDENT

PLAY FORMULA 1 DREAM TEAM



PASS NOTES

Martin Brundle challenged Ayrton Senna in Formula 3 in the early 1980s, but has not so far been able to translate youthful talent into achievement on the Grand Prix scene. He has driven a lot of bad cars, but has also had his chances with the best: he consistently finished on the podium for Benetton in 1992, never quite making it to the top step. Brundle's Achilles heel is his inability to find the "demon lap" in qualifying, but he compensates with fine racecraft once the cars leave the grid. Lucky to walk away from an airborne excursion in Melbourne, Brundle showed typical pluck in taking the restart soon after.



WIN a drive in a Grand Prix car

Formula 1 Dream Team is just like Fantasy Football: you pick and manage your dream grand prix team to score points over the coming season.

Even though the grand prix season has started, it is not too late to join in: pit your wits against other enthusiasts and you could win our overall 1996 champion's prize, a drive in a Formula One car plus additional prizes for each race.

Your team must comprise three drivers, a chassis and an engine; your budget is £40 million. Make your selections from the grand prix shopping list printed below; the only restriction is that your third driver must come from the £1 million category.

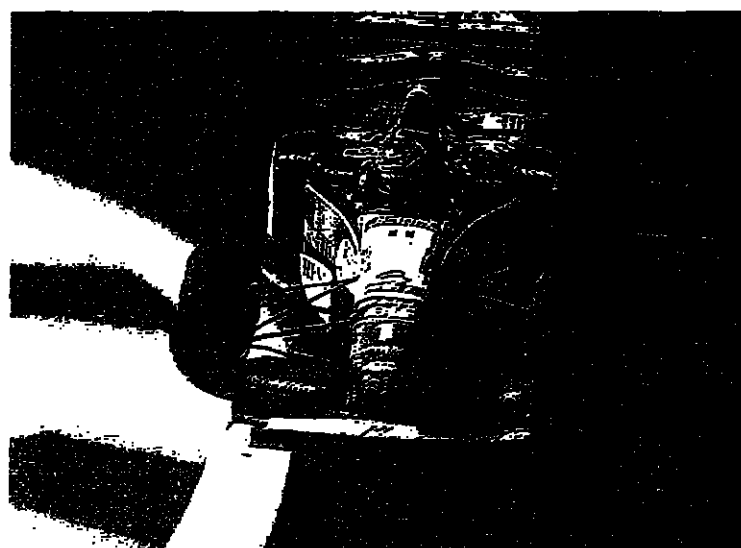
Details of how to enter are given on this page. You can enter a team at any point during the grand prix season but the earlier you enter, the greater your chances of being our overall champion. Remember, there are prizes for the winning Dream Team in each individual grand prix so you can enter a different team for each race.

HOW YOU SCORE

Points are awarded per race to the top six finishers, based on the Formula One World Championship points scoring system (10, 6, 4, 3, 2, 1) but with an extra 10 points awarded to each of the top six finishers.

All drivers are eligible to score for a top six finish but can also notch up extra points as follows:

- The fastest driver in race-day warm-up will collect six points, with five for the second and so on down to one point for the sixth quickest.
- Drivers score one point for each place they make up over their grid position. Points are not deducted by losing places.
- Five points are lost if your driver posts first retirement, four for second down to one point lost for the fifth retirement.
- If your driver makes the quickest pitstop (from the entry of the pitlane to the exit) you gain five points.
- If your driver sets the fastest lap time in the race, you gain five points.
- If your driver receives a stop/go penalty, you lose five points.
- If your driver starts on pole position, you gain five points.
- The Independent will name a Driver Of The Day after each race for a particularly impressive performance, worth five points.
- Non-qualification for a grand prix loses you two points. If a driver is on the FIA's published starting grid but fails to take the start, no points are lost.
- Drivers removed from the results for any reason lose all points gained that weekend. Any driver not competing in a grand prix weekend scores no points.
- Chassis score and lose points in the same way as drivers for a top six finish or any early retirement. The score is based on the first chassis home of that particular manufacturer. Likewise, only the first chassis retirement will count if they are both among the first five to retire.
- Engine rules are the same as the chassis rules, without the retirement penalties.



DREAM TEAM TOP PRIZE

The Dream Team manager with the highest number of points at the end of the Grand Prix Championship season will win our top prize - a drive in a 650bhp F1 car. You will be flown to the AGS team's training school in the south of France for the most exhilarating experience of your life. The school specialises in F1 courses and provides all the racewear and instruction you will need for the day.

EUROPEAN GRAND PRIX PRIZE

The Dream Team manager with the highest number of points following the European Grand Prix will win a trip for two to the Spanish Grand Prix on June 2. We have two grandstand seats in prime position, from which you will be able to see all the action on the Barcelona circuit.

Argentinian Prize Winner

Congratulations to Joe Budynowicz from Hornchurch, Essex with his team Pistons Broke 4. He has won an initial trial at the Nigel Mansell Racing School.

HOW TO ENTER

Choose your Dream Team from the shopping list on this page. Remember, you must choose three drivers (the third from the £1 million section), one chassis and one engine. You must not exceed your budget of £40 million.

Give your team a name and register it by ringing 0891 891 805.

You will immediately be asked the entry question: How many races are there in this year's Formula One World Championship?

To enter your Dream Team details you can use one of two methods.

Method 1 uses a tone phone that lets you key in the code numbers of your driver, chassis and engine choices. The computer will check that your team falls within budget and is eligible.

Method 2 uses a non-tone phone and you give your details verbally. A budget check is not possible using this method.

When you have registered your Dream Team, you will be asked to predict the number of points this year's champion will notch up over the year. In case of a tie at the end of the season, the nearest figure to the champion's points will win the top prize. In the event of a further tie, the team that registered first will win.

Once you have registered your team you will be asked for your name, address and telephone number. Your team selections plus your personal details will be played back to you and, when you confirm that they are correct, you will be given a PIN number.

This is confirmation of your entry and will enable you to access the score checking line.

There is no limit on the number of teams an individual can enter, but only one team can be registered per call.

CHECKING YOUR SCORE

You can check your team's position at any time by calling 0891 891 806 and quoting your PIN number. If you want to know the individual driver, chassis and engine scores from the most recent race, call 0891 891 807. This line will also list the Top 50 Formula One Dream Teams.

Rules

1. All telephone calls are charged at 39p per minute cheap rate, 49p per minute at all other times, with a typical call to secure your entry lasting between five and seven minutes.
2. The deadline to be included in a particular race is midday the Friday prior to that race.
3. The judge's decision is final, no correspondence will be entered into and there is no cash alternative for prizes.
4. Employees of Newspaper Publishing Plc, Haymarket Publishing Ltd and all associated companies and their families are ineligible.
5. Entrants must be 18 or over and residents of the UK or the Irish Republic.
6. To be eligible for the main prize, you must hold a current driving licence, be no more than 1.95m tall and weigh no more than 220lbs.
7. All scores will be worked out according to the official FIA time sheets produced at the meeting. The values stated for drivers, engines and chassis bear no relation to real life.
8. In the event of a tie for the Dream Team Top Prize or for any of the individual race prizes, the team that registered first will win.
9. For lost PIN numbers, call 0891 891 808. Helpline: 01275 344183.
10. The Top 50 Teams Line, lists the top 50 teams from the last race. Both the Team Position Check Line and the Results & Top 50 Teams Line will be updated at 2pm on the Monday following a race.

Make your selection from the Grand Prix Shopping List

DRIVERS

£25m
1 M Schumacher
£22m
2 J Alesi
3 D Hill
£20m
4 G Berger
£18m
5 D Coulthard
6 E Irvine
7 J Villeneuve
£15m
8 M Hakkinen
9 K H Frenzen
£10m
10 M Brundle
11 R Barrichello
12 J Herbert

£8m

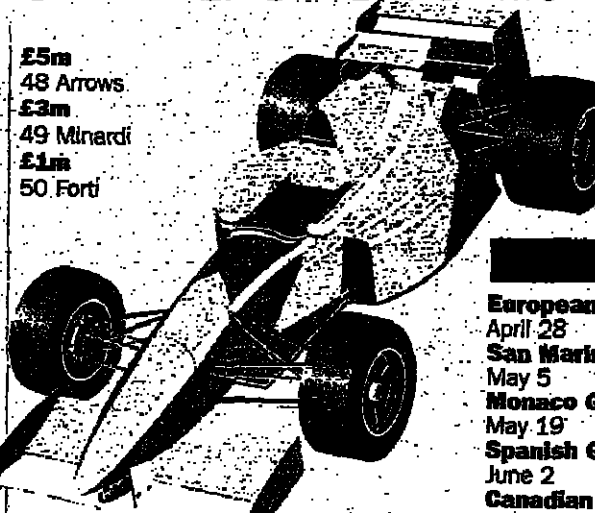
13 M Salo
14 P Larri
£4m
15 P Diniz
16 U Katayama
17 J Verstappen
18 O Panis
£3m
19 L Badoer
20 R Rosset
21 A Montemini
£2m
22 G Fisichella
23 V Sospini
24 T Marques
25 F Lagorce
26 H Noda
27 T Inoue

£1m

28 M Blundell
29 J C Boulton
30 K Black
31 K Burt
32 E Collard
33 N Fontana
34 D Franchitti
35 N Lanni
£1m
36 J Magnussen
37 A Prost
38 G Tarquini
39 K Wendlinger
*Not competing in the European GP but may compete later

CHASSIS

£20m
40 Benetton
41 Williams
£18m
42 Ferrari
£15m
43 McLaren
£14m
44 Sauber
45 Jordan
£10m
46 Ligier
£6m
47 Tyrrell



ENGINE

£25m
51 Renault
£18m
52 Ferrari
£15m
53 Mercedes
£12m
54 Peugeot
£10m
55 Mugen
£8m
56 Ford V10
£6m
57 Yamaha
£4m
58 Hart
£3m
59 Ford Zetec V8
£2m
60 Ford ED V8

GRAND PRIX '96 RACE SCHEDULE

European GP
April 28
San Marino GP
May 5
Monaco GP
May 19
Spanish GP
June 2
Canadian GP

June 16
French GP
June 30
British GP
July 14
German GP
July 28
Hungarian GP
August 11

Belgian GP
August 25
Italian GP
September 8
Portuguese GP
September 22
Japanese GP
October 13

DREAM TEAM registration: 0891 891 805 ENTER TODAY

● TEAM POSITION CHECK LINE: 0891 891 806
● RESULTS & TOP 50 TEAMS LINE: 0891 891 807

0891 891 805

Sport

Difficulties are imposed by a ludicrous interpretation of the laws that discourages players from trying to win the ball properly

is all very well for the football authorities to legislate for skill over raw power but they had better pay some attention to the growing list of serious injuries.

Following so swiftly on other serious incidents – David Buss of Coventry, the Liverpool defender Steve Harkness, and Gary Charles of Nottingham Forest will be disallowed for some time – the compound nature of that 20-year-old Graeme Munro suffered in Luton's slurs at Port Vale on Tuesday when on loan from Manchester United may strike you as an unfortunate coincidence.

This does not allow for worrying innocence and difficulties imposed by a quite ludicrous interpretation of the laws that discourages players

from attempting to win the ball properly.

Concern over being shown a yellow card merely for an error in timing leads to dangerous improvisations that increase the possibility of ending up in hospital.

Watching the game today there are times when you cannot help wining. It is not so much rough play that catches the eye but naive lunges.

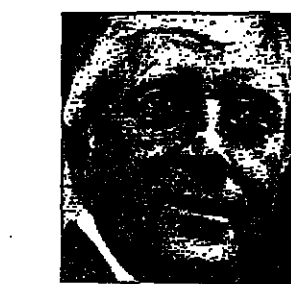
I mean, how many players know how to execute a tackle, how many of them would have fallen victim to the hard men of past eras?

The problem did not come upon football suddenly but a policy ordered by FIFA, the governing body of world football, for the World Cup in the United States two years ago and since

applied more vigorously here than in any other country, has brought it into the open. As action replays on television show the cleanest strike for a ball is now likely to be punished, causing the tackler to risk injury with a contorted, ill-balanced challenge.

Nobody should regard this as simply a personal observation. Fearful of seeing important players struck down, managers and coaches are always going on about it.

"You preach common sense but because of the attitude adopted by so many of our referees, who of course are under orders, it doesn't always work," one said. "What do you say to a lad who gets sent off for a perfectly legitimate challenge, especially when television shows that the referee was at fault? So in at-



KEN JONES

tempting to compensate players twist themselves out of shape and end up injured.

Because it is difficult to create realistic situations, education in tackling comes largely from experience. In any case, the most important thing

is attitude. "It's the player who wants the ball most who usually gets it," the old-timers used to emphasise.

"When we were going to start getting into them," a tough and much revered manager of Wales, the late Jimmy Murphy, complained at half-time during a game against England in Cardiff.

"Come on Jim," protested one of the players in a Welsh team which included such notables of the day as John and Mel Charles. Ivor Allchurch, Cliff Jones and Jack Kelsey, "we're giving them some stick."

"Giving them some stick are we," Murphy chided. "Well you tell me why they keep getting up."

A drawback for young footballers generally now is the advantage of playing alongside and against ex-

perienced men in reserve-team matches is no longer available to them.

"How long have you been in the game?" I was asked coldly at 17 by a rugged Northern Ireland international. "Just a few weeks," I replied jauntily. "Well, make the most of it because this could be your last," he growled.

Good advice was never to trust anyone on the field. "Let that be a lesson to you all," I remember a well known hard case saying on a stretcher after a normally meek opponent had inflicted a nasty injury.

This not being an entirely original theme – the proliferation of yellow and red cards this season is irritating personally – I have been

rebutted by a reader from Newcastle who supposed that a case was being made for violent play.

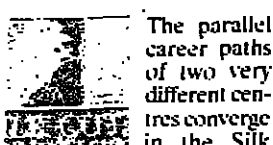
The point put forward was that no player, however skilful, is entitled to expect special protection. It is a hard game they are playing out there.

"Referees won't always look after you," Pele was told when introduced as a 17-year-old to the national team of Brazil, "so learn to look after yourself." Pele did not go looking for a fight but it was not wise to provoke him.

There is more to football than meets the eye. What meets these eyes is evidence to suggest that if the game is becoming more dangerous then the authorities are partly responsible.

CHALLENGE CUP COUNTDOWN: Celebrated Saint meets raging Bull in midfield battle. Dave Hadfield reports

Newlove and Calland centres of attention



The parallel career paths of two very different centres converge in the Silk Cut Challenge Cup final at Wembley on Sunday when the game's most sensitive player faces one who has been among its most serious.

In one corner there will be the Saints' Paul Newlove, a year of such obvious class that £500,000 his new club paid for him in November likely to remain a world record for a very long time.

In the other, Matt Calland, whose reputation suggested more rather than a halo – he referred to himself as "the one Jones of rugby" – but who blossomed into a matchmaker with the Bulls since Newlove's departure.

When the two encounter each other at Wembley, it will be blue chip versus blue collar. Although Newlove would be nothing better than to have a burden of the transfer record lifted off his shoulders, there is no avoiding the pressure at his status brings.

"I've got a reputation for being laid back and not caring, but I don't know where that comes from," he said. "I do feel the pressure of the fee, because every match you are a marked man and everyone expects so much of you. What I really hope that someone takes over the record fee soon."

Newlove will never be entirely comfortable in the role of the club's superstar, and an extra

complication Saints could have done without is his ongoing dispute with News Ltd over a "loyalty" bonus which has seen him withdraw co-operation from that company's newspapers during the run-up to the final.

By his own standards, Newlove has sometimes been a little subdued on the field as well this season, outshone by teammates like Danny Arnold and Bobbie Goulding. With perfect timing, however, he exploded back into his most compelling form in Saints' final match before Wembley, at Halifax last Sunday, scoring a hat-trick of tries, the last of which – a side-stepping run half the length of the field – made even the most experienced observers jaws drop.

"He was the difference between the sides. It was as simple as that," the Saints' chief executive, David Howes, said.

"He won it for us single-handedly," adds his coach, Shaun McRae. "He was just superb." For his price tag, he is expected to be.

"He is a world-class player, there's no doubt about that," Calland said. "And sometimes I feel like I've been following him around all my career."

Originally with Rochdale Hornets, Calland was signed by Featherstone as a replacement for Newlove. But where his predecessor had been famous for dazzling centre play and spectacular tries, Calland became better known for his woeful disciplinary record.

In the year before his transfer to Bradford, he was sent off and suspended four times; he was even serving a ban when the Bulls, in a notable act of faith, signed him last November.

If there was scepticism at Saints about whether Newlove was worth half a million, there were doubts in Bradford over whether a player who could not stay on the pitch was worth anything at all.

Worse was to follow. Calland was soon dismissed again for the same fatal flaw of going high in the tackle and banned until the end of the Centenary season. "I needed to have pointed out to me what I was doing wrong," he said. "It was a technical failing. I was getting caught in no man's land and I was throwing out an arm off balance."

The Bulls' coach, Brian Smith, had justified the decision to sign Calland by insisting that his faulty technique could be corrected and much of his enforced lay-off was devoted to doing just that.

The player also worked ferociously hard in training, building up his strength and physique to the extent that, according to Smith, "his mother doesn't recognise him and he's had to throw out all his shirts."

Smith was so impressed by Calland's determination that, once his suspension was over, he threw him straight into the Cup semi-final against Leeds. It looked risky, but the one-time wild man played outstandingly well, as he did in scoring a hat-trick in the Bulls' narrow defeat at St Helens 12 days ago.

"Anyone who can't see that Matt Calland is one of the most exciting ball-carriers in the game isn't using his eyes," said Smith. "I also think we all saw who won the contest between him and Newlove." McRae is philosophical about the comparison that day. "I just put it down as one bad day at the office," he says. "Apart from that, Paul has been very consistent."

It is not that Smith does not rate Newlove, whom he made every effort to sign when he was coach at Hull and the player was about to turn professional. It would take a benighted coach to be oblivious to the danger he presents at Wembley, but he believes that in Calland he has the player to counter him.

"You have to be confident whoever you're up against," the player himself says. "All I can do is my best – and hope that that's good enough."

That best is already better than most judges ever thought it could be. Reformed character and textbook low tackle that he now is, Smith is hoping Calland still has enough devilment in his play to knock Newlove's halo askew on Saturday.



Paul Newlove, a world-class performer

Photograph: Simon Wilkinson

McRae rails at Smith's selection

St Helens coach, Shaun McRae, named a Wembley side that no surprises yesterday and cast doubt on the line-up chosen by Bradford Bulls, writes Dave Hadfield.

Despite dark warnings of a relegation, McRae has selected a team with just one change from a semi-final, with the prolific Ian Huntley replacing Ian Huntley, who is one of five potential substitutes competing for four places.

"There are players in the starting line-up who can consider

themselves extremely lucky," said the Australian, who has yet to coach a losing Saints side. "They have certainly been spoken to about their performances over the last couple of weeks."

McRae's harshest words, however, were reserved for his opposite number, the Bulls coach, Brian Smith, who sprang a major surprise the previous day by naming Jon Hamer in the front row despite his last first-team appearance, as substitute, being as long ago as early January.

"I don't take any notice of

that side," he said. "To suggest that Hamer will play is ridiculous. He must think we're in Disneyland, but when has Brian Smith ever named a squad a few days before a game that has actually played?"

"I would be very surprised if a player who hasn't played in the first team for four months was used, unless he has been doing secret training somewhere."

Like McRae, however, Smith could be planning to make extensive use of his substitutes, with Hamer expected only to

contribute in the first quarter. The Saints coach is likely to have three men on his bench – Tommy Martyn, Vila Matautia and Ian Pickavance – who have been used effectively recently as impact players late in games.

This is the first 17-man Wembley and both coaches know that their ability to mix and match on the pitch will be crucial.

St Helens (v Bradford, Silk Cut Challenge Cup final, Wembley, Saturday): Prescott: Arnold, Goble, Newlove, Subbitt; Hammond, Goulding; Peters, Cunningham, Leathers, Jovett, Booth, Northey. Substitutes from: Huntley, Martyn, Matautia, Morley, Pickavance.

SPORTS LETTERS

The rugby union debate

The dispute between the Rugby Football Union and England's top clubs over who should run the newly professional game and how the new money coming into the game should be shared out has divided Independent readers. Here is a selection of your views

Africa is looming. By yet again demonstrating bad judgement, the RFU is alienating England – even from the other home nations. The hard work of rugby people over many years is being ruined and the situation has now become intolerable to supporters and players alike.

Steve Bale's article of 18 April summed up what many fans and club administrators already knew. We have a bunch of self-important amateurs running our professional sport. Yours, N J ALEXANDER London W11

From Mr G Cowan Sir: So Donald Kerr has told Cliff Brittle to "Sort it out or get out" – a message that most rugby administrators are anxious to deliver to Mr Kerr himself and the rest of the new breed that seem to have recently appeared on the scene.

While the greedy antics of the handful of clubs involved in Epruc fill your column inches, the vast number of RFU clubs

have had to wait to learn what is to happen to all their teams next season, as the fixture lists cannot be settled until we learn whether this Epruc lot are going or staying.

Mr Kerr should not forget that Cliff Brittle was voted into office by a huge majority of ordinary RFU clubs specifically to look after their interests now. But the greedy, bullying tactics of Epruc are causing the rest of the rugby membership to lose patience with them.

As the fixture secretary for my local club, I cannot believe that at this stage in the season, I have not been able to organise a single fixture for any of my club's senior sides for next year.

Mr Kerr, the time has come to call your bluff. Please carry out your threat and leave the RFU as quickly as possible and push off to bankruptcy with the rest of your ilk or accept what you are being given at the rest of the RFU's expense.

The senior clubs have lived off the backs of the junior clubs for years, so now "put up or shut

up". Then, at least, the hundreds of honorary fixture secretaries around the country can get on with sorting out their B.V.N's fixtures for next season. Yours, GEOFF COWAN Maidenhead

From Mr D Davies Sir: As an elected founder member of the major clubs sub-committee of the Seventies, the first direct club representation on the RFU, and as chairman of the Northern Rugby Union Leagues Action Committee in the Eighties, I have helped in some way to bring more success, democracy and fairness to all levels of clubs in the RFU.

Although completely club-orientated at Halifax, I was impressed by the willingness of the RFU to listen and act, and I represent the unfair press they are receiving from Steve Bale and Dave Hadfield plus others.

I have clear views on "open rugby" which I think represent those of a majority of administrators of the game at all levels.

The game requires an efficient overall controlling body to look at all aspects, and guide it wisely. The RFU is there, well set up, organised, equipped and would, if encouraged, do it well. Any substitute senior club orientated body, especially if led by non-rugby entrepreneurs would do it much worse, make mistakes and bring division and chaos. So leave the RFU be.

Consistency throughout, would bring simplicity and understanding. Many of the proposed small variations in the Courage Championship are vague and illogical.

All monies from TV, sponsors etc, should be divided fairly as the Courage money is at present. It should be negotiated by the governing body – the RFU – and given to all clubs in fair proportion. If the lower clubs do not get a fair deal, there will be no success at the top clubs, who use the players developed by the lower ones. The unfairly vilified Cliff Brittle has emerged to me and many more as a champion of democracy and sense. Of course the successful should receive the best rewards, but the others must be regarded. Elitism is a cancer to be discouraged. Yours, DAI DAVIES Todmorden, Lancashire

Jackson returns to the domestic fold

athletics
like ROWBOTTOM

Colin Jackson announced yesterday that he has lifted his boycott of meetings organised by the British Athletics Federation, and gave the credit to Peter Hier, BAF official currently recovering from a heart attack.

Hier, a member of the federation's promotions unit, flew early 11,000 miles earlier this year to persuade Jackson, who was training in Australia, to change his mind.

The 29-year-old Welshman, who vowed last season never to join in a BAF meeting while Peter Radford remained executive chairman, said yesterday: "Peter Hier cleared a lot of things in my mind. He told me British athletics wasn't just about one man. I realised how hard the promotions people worked to put on major meetings. I didn't want to kick them in the face, have had a lot of pressure from the general public to change my mind. But the fact is if Peter didn't come out to see me I don't think I would be running."

Hier, who suffered a heart attack last Thursday, is said to be "comfortable" in hospital.

Jackson will be back for the Gateshead Grand Prix on 30 June but still insists he will have nothing to do with Radford.

"Me and him are dead and buried," he said yesterday.

Jackson refused to run after being carpentered by Radford last summer. He claimed he had been lectured like a schoolboy for competing in Italy 24 hours after pulling out of the AAA Championships with a muscle injury. Jackson now admits that he made mistakes – principally in not speaking to his coach, Malcolm Arnold, before leaving.

"All I had on my mind was getting out to Italy and testing my injured leg," he said. "I have to put my hands up and say that I could have calmed down the situation." Arnold commented: "I have coached Colin since he was 17 and I was anxious that the later years of his career did not come under a cloud."

"I am optimistic he is in for a successful season. He is in the shape he was before winning the world title in Stuttgart [1993]."

Swede leads rout of seeds

Tennis

JOHN ROBERTS reports from Monte Carlo

It is some time since Goran Ivanisevic lost an opening match, as his record of four titles from seven finals this year shows. Yesterday, however, the big-serving Croat was ill-prepared to meet Magnus Gustafsson at the Monte Carlo Open, and the Swede swept past him, 6-2, 6-2.

Gustafsson, who lost almost a year of his career following a shoulder operation, has restored himself to the world's top 50 from No 611 over the past 12 months with the help of wild cards, such as the one he received here.

"I expected a much tougher match," he said, "but Goran told me it was his first time this year on the clay, and I had played on it already. I was warm in my clothes, as we say in Sweden."

Ivanisevic was by no means the day's only casualty. Whatever the saying about clothes might be in Spain, Sergi Bruguera, a twice winner of the tournament, was not pleased to be eliminated by a fellow citizen of Barcelona who has the same name as a lace headscarf: Mantilla.

Felix Mantilla, a 21-year-old qualifier ranked No 84, who has a severe haircut and a mean backhand, put paid to the ninth-seeded Bruguera, 7-5, 6-2.

This is the season when Spanish competitors make the most of their time on the clay, and Bruguera, by his own admission, is still not moving as well as he would like after his injury problems last year. Mantilla, one of a posse of Spanish youngsters who have risen through the junior ranks, seized his opportunity.

So, too, did Carlos Costa, another Spanish qualifier, who eliminated Michael Chang, the No 3 seed, 6-7, 6-2, 6-4. It is Chang's first visit to Monte Carlo, and last year's French Open finalist did not arrive from the concrete courts of Tokyo until Sunday. In common with Ivanisevic, he has yet to find his legs on clay.

Chang was one of eight seeds to vanish yesterday, and 10 of the 16 seeds have disappeared after three days. The top two, Thomas Muster, the defending champion, and Andre Agassi are among the survivors, but Boris Becker only advanced to a third-round meeting with the exciting Chilean, Marcelo Rios, after defeating the Czech David Rikl, 6-4, 4-6, 6-3.

Jim Courier, the eighth seed, lost to Spain's Javier Sanchez, 6-3, 6-3, and illness contributed to the sixth-seeded Yevgeny Kafelnikov's defeat by France's Cedric Pioline, 6-4, 6-3. And Sjeng Schalken, a Dutch qualifier, outlasted Sweden's Thomas Enqvist, the seventh seed, 3-6, 6-3, 6-3.

Among the non-seeded personalities, Stefan Edberg's three-set defeat in a duel of attacking play with the Dutchman Richard Krajicek was less surprising than the way the match unfolded. Few players could give Edberg eight games start on any surface, but Krajicek retrieved a 0-6, 0-2 deficit to win, 0-6, 6-4, 6-2.

Andrei Medvedev, the Ukrainian No 11 seed who won the title two years ago, made short work of Mark Philippoussis, winning 6-0, 6-2 in 59 minutes. It could be said that the big-serving young Australian was off his game: 12 double-faults, no aces.

Britain were relegated from the Europe/Africa Group One of the Fed Cup at La Manga, Spain, yesterday despite beating Slovenia 2-1 in their last pool match.

